

## **'Using Technology to Document Violations: Enabling Sex Worker Communities to Document Violence Against Them in India and Cambodia'**

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# 1. Synthesis

*'Using Technology to Document Violations: Enabling Sex-worker Communities to Document Violence Against Them in India and Cambodia' was a two and a half year long project, carried out by Tactical Tech in partnership with two sex-worker collectives, **Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee** (DMSC) in Calcutta, India, **Women's Network for Unity** (WNU) in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and a Delhi-based research organisation **reach Social Solutions** (reach) that studied the project from an evaluation perspective.*

*The project achieved the following;*

- ⬆ Significant shift in partner's advocacy strategies from reactive to proactive strategies with a potential impact on the lives and wellbeing of 70,000 sex workers.*
- ⬆ Transformation in human rights documentation processes carried out by partners which included evidence gathering and analysis on violence against sex-workers and visualisations of this evidence.*
- ⬆ Growth in knowledge of the importance of effective information management in digital documentation.*
- ⬆ Insight into community-owned and aggregated data given a growing, global movement towards open data for accountability and transparency.*
- ⬆ Development of integrated self-evaluation tools which will continue to be used by partners.*
- ⬆ Contribution to the scholarship on violence against sex-workers and advocacy for their human rights.*

Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee: or 'Durbar', which in Bengali means 'unstoppable' or 'indomitable' is a forum of 65,000 sex workers based in West Bengal, India. DMSC is active in challenging and addressing the structural barriers that form the everyday reality of sex workers' lives as they relate to their material deprivation or their social exclusion with the aim of altering them. DMSC is explicit about its political objective of fighting for recognition of sex work as work and, of sex workers as workers.

Women's Network for Unity is a grassroots representative collective of 5,000 sex workers in Phnom Penh and regional provinces outside the capital. The network seeks to promote the rights of sex workers to earn a living in a safe environment, free from exploitation and social stigma.

Tactical Tech's initial proposal to IDRC was to improve the digital documentation techniques being employed by sex-worker collectives in reporting on violence against them. As a result of a process that was responsive and adaptive to the needs of the partner organisations, the nature of the aims changed and evolved over the course of the project.

An initial preparatory grant for this research project entitled “**Getting Sex Worker Voices Heard**” explored options for enhancing sex worker advocacy through the use of technology. During this grant we explored many options, including mapping and use of mobiles. During the process of assessing needs it emerged that ending violence against sex workers was the biggest challenge for both organisations. It was therefore agreed that this research project would focus on digital documentation techniques which might enable the organisations to improve their advocacy around this issue.

This project then evolved as Tactical Tech learned more about the organisations' challenges related to their advocacy, their use of technology and the state of their existing documentation activities. The ultimate outputs of this project took the form of graphical representations of the evidence collected for use in their advocacy efforts.

At the beginning of the project, baseline reviews and needs assessment visits with both sex-worker organisations revealed that they were documenting their work in some detail, but were **not able to use this information in a way that impacted on their advocacy**. Both groups said their advocacy work was struggling.

Evidence and documentation remained in handwritten ledgers, binders containing individual case studies and testimonies, printed reports and spreadsheets. Advocacy on violence against sex-workers was reactive rather than proactive. They were able to respond to immediate and local threats, but were not strategic in identifying key messages, backed up with evidence, that could be conveyed to policymakers, parliamentarians, local government leaders and law enforcement.

So, from an initial objective of enhancing the groups' use of technology to document violence, the goal of the project shifted to strengthening their use of information in advocacy, and helping them refine their advocacy strategies on violence against sex-workers.

Reviews of existing research on sex workers show a focus on: HIV prevention, care and support; and a struggle between competing lobbies who are either for or against the implementation of anti-trafficking legislation as a means to end sex-work. There is little research on violence against sex-workers and advocacy for their human rights. **Data and evidence about sex worker communities are often collected by outsiders and the ownership of the data is rarely with sex workers themselves.**

In order to challenge this dynamic, Tactical Tech developed the idea of the 'Atlas of Sex Work' using the data collected by WNU and DMSC themselves. The 'Atlas of Sex Work' concept was an opportunity to showcase ideas for creative aggregations of information about the lives of sex workers and the conditions of mistreatment that they face (see Appendix 5 for the concepts developed for DMSC and WNU). Inspired by the Subjective Atlas of Palestine<sup>1</sup> the concept proved useful for further developing ideas and inspiring advocacy messages for target audiences. Also through this process, both organisations gained insight into how data about mistreatments can be transformed into visual outputs for advocacy.



The Subjective Atlas of Palestine served as an inspiration for the Atlas of Sex Work

Through a series of capacity building and planning workshops, we shared other examples of evidence based advocacy from around the world. Tactical Tech tried to build processes to equip both organisations to take on further projects on visualisation of evidence and develop their own Atlas of Sex-Work packages in the future.

The assessments revealed that neither organisation's advocacy efforts would have been enhanced by the use of digital documentation technologies, such as Martus and Ushahidi. Instead, efforts needed to be made to increase skills and techniques in handling information itself. At this point we made the decision for the project not to be technology led. We also found that both groups were using mobile phones to manage and stay in touch with sex-workers who were being harassed and detained by the police. The kinds of phones they used (base models with limited functionality, and often second or third hand), the regular disconnection of numbers, and loss and theft of mobiles (sometimes having mobiles confiscated by the police) made documentation through mobiles unviable.

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<sup>1</sup> See: <http://www.annelysdevet.nl/palestine/>



This is one of the key learnings from this process – **groups that adopt technology platforms and devices without reviewing and stringently assessing their overall approach to working with information, often find themselves struggling to manage their technologies instead of leveraging their information.**

In response to the insights gained from the workshops and assessments, Tactical Tech shifted the focus of the project to the outputs from the groups' documentation. We supported DMSC and WNU in developing advocacy messages for key target audiences they wanted to influence; in aggregating and analysing evidence of the extent and nature of violence happening in sex-worker communities; and in developing the visual packaging to convey this evidence to target audiences. The information collected by DMSC and WNU were then transferred into information graphics by an Indian design firm, Mediashala. [Mediashala](#) is a design and technology company that Tactical Tech has worked with over the past three years on a range of projects. Mediashala was started by graduates of the National Institute of Design (NID), Ahmedabad, India and was initially supported by NID's design incubation program. They now have an office in Bangalore as well.

**As a result of this project, both DMSC and WNU gathered evidence on violence against sex workers, analysed their evidence and created visualisations for use in their advocacy efforts.**

### ***DMSC's Documentation***

DMSC aggregated a considerable data-set about the prevalence and nature of violence experienced by more than 22,000 sex-workers in West Bengal, India, and the perpetrators responsible for this violence. Their work has resulted in five infographics around the theme 'Who Victimises Sex-Workers', each infographic targeted at a particular audience that DMSC wants to influence.

Three of these infographics are aimed at the police, MLAs (Members of the State Legislative Assembly) and Panchayat Pradhans (leaders of the local self-government under the Panchayati Raj<sup>2</sup> decentralised rural administration), and two are aimed at general audiences, the media and sex-workers. All five infographics are available in English, Hindi and Bengali, however the Bengali text is still under revision by DMSC. DMSC is yet to test these posters with their target audiences but have shared them internally, within their networks of sex-workers and staff. (See **Appendix 1** for the English language visualisations developed by Mediashala and Tactical Tech.)

**End-line assessments with DMSC reveal that the staff feel the project has helped them achieve a significant shift in their advocacy strategies and has convinced them of the benefits of working with evidence in a more focused manner across other projects and departments. DMSC also found that their own beliefs about the reality of violence within the sex-worker community were challenged by their data.**

For example, at the start of the project, DMSC were quite convinced that their advocacy with the police in the capital city of Calcutta had been successful and that rates of police violence had reduced; they acknowledged that police violence remained high in rural districts where less advocacy had taken place. This was seriously challenged by their own evidence as it was found that the police in Calcutta were still responsible for high rates of violence against sex-workers.

**Sharing this data with sex-workers themselves has been important in furthering conversations about their rights.** Being able to identify domestic violence by long-term clients (referred to as a Babu, who is like a husband but is not legally married) as violence, and recognising the impact of verbal and psychological abuse on sex-workers has made it possible to talk about the importance of addressing violence within their own communities and relationships.

### ***WNU'S Documentation***

**WNU's objective was to collect evidence to show the negative impact of the Anti-Trafficking Law on sex-workers and to show how the police were misusing the**

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<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panchayati\\_raj](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panchayati_raj)

**powers this law gives them for detention and arrest.** The issue facing WNU is that raids and arrests under the Anti-Trafficking law have forced s to go underground. It has become difficult to reach out to sex workers with condoms, HIV prevention, care and treatment.

Tactical Tech has worked with WNU to develop three briefs for visualisations of their evidence: “Rescue us from the Rescuers,” “Your Law Brings Us More Problems, Not Solutions” and “Not Being Rescued from Poverty.” At the time of writing this report, WNU's three micro-projects are being developed into visual advocacy materials by Mediashala.

However, using pilot data, WNU made their own maps and charts about the impacts of the Anti-trafficking law on sex workers. (See Appendix 2 for the draft visualisations of pilot data on maps made by WNU) These have been shared with policymakers, bureaucrats and MPs, and partner NGOs.

WNU reports that the aggregation of evidence about violence against sex-workers, even in a pilot form, garnered interest and attention from their peers and audiences and gave the small collective a great deal of confidence and assurance about working with evidence and how it can strengthen their advocacy. They are also being approached by other organisations and institutions interested in using their data to support other advocacy efforts around gender-based violence.



Government Official Refers to WNU Tool lying on his desk when evaluators arrived for a formal interview. Photo by *r e a c h*

### ***Working with r e a c h***

Acting as an external evaluator, *r e a c h*, followed this collaboration and studied how new approaches to using information in advocacy influenced the advocacy work of the two sex-worker collectives and impacted their organisations. In addition to baseline and end-line studies of the two communities, *r e a c h* also supported DMSC, WNU and later Tactical Tech, to develop a Self-Assessment tool in a Framework based on their vision.

The intention was for Tactical Tech, DMSC and WNU to monitor and reflect on their own progress through the course of the project. The self-reflective tools developed for the research component was challenging to implement, but eventually resulted in both WNU and DMSC showing great interest in developing self-reflective tools for their organisations.

The self-reflective tools have also given Tactical Tech clear documentation on how their approach to working with grassroots groups on evidence-based projects can help shift advocacy approaches from reactive to proactive. (See Appendix 3 for a full evaluation report from *r e a c h*)

### ***Conclusions***

This project resulted in a number of lessons learned for Tactical Tech about working with evidence from the ground up:

- How to support activists to aggregate different kinds of data as evidence about their issues, and how this may be visually represented.
- What the best means are for working with data and evidence from an action and advocacy perspective, as opposed to a more academic, research perspective, which is fairly common

in NGOs, though not always relevant to their needs.

- Reflections on community-owned and aggregated data given a growing, global movement towards open data for accountability and transparency.
- The appropriate role of emerging technologies with organisations lacking a proper strategic foundation to use them effectively.
- The importance of using adaptive, rather than proscriptive approaches when working with advocacy organisations and grassroots organisations with constantly changing priorities.

These valuable reflections and learnings will now be featured as case-studies in our soon-to-be released publications on working with data, technology and design in advocacy.

## 2. Research problem

The research problem changed during the course of this project. The project started with the stated objective **“to support two sex worker advocacy groups in India and Cambodia to use digital documentation techniques for improved reporting of violations”**.

We then changed this to focus on **how their information and documentation could be used strategically in evidence-based advocacy**. The action research conducted by the evaluation partner focused on how the advocacy strategies of the two partner organisations changed over the course of the Tactical Tech intervention.

The project began with a preliminary phase where WNU, DMSC and VAMP<sup>3</sup> received technical support and training on information and communication technologies. This led to an agreement that Tactical Tech, in collaboration with WNU and DMSC (VAMP eventually bowed out of the project), would explore how digital documentation technologies might assist sex worker groups in documenting violations, and that they would investigate how this information would be communicated to policy makers and to influence the practice of sex-worker rights advocacy.

The central question at the time of writing the research proposal was: **“Whether and how digital documentation techniques can improve documentation and reporting of violations against sex workers as well as internal communication and advocacy by members of the sex worker organisations WNU and DMSC?”**

After conducting initial needs assessments with WNU and DMSC and examining the documentation techniques being used, we realised that introducing technology platforms into their existing documentation and processes would not have contributed to their overall use of the information aggregated. Improving documentation would have meant revising current procedures for collecting data and information across various activities of the organisations, which was outside the mandate of this project.

The documentation did not require improvement: the real need was to enable the organisations to use just enough technology to process their existing information and information-processing in a more targeted and effective manner for advocacy campaigns. Thus the decision was taken to focus on tangible outputs for use in advocacy work that could be derived from existing documentation efforts.

So the research question was modified to: **“Whether and how the documentation and reporting of violations against sex workers can improve their ability to conduct advocacy and decrease the amount of violence that is happening in the sex worker community.”**

Specific objectives of the research included:

- To explore changes in ways DMSC/WNU use information to influence policies.
- To understand how evidence gathering, collation and analysis at DMSC/WNU has changed.
- To understand how organizational change occurs and appears as a result of the changes in the way DMSC/WNU operates.
- To explore changes in participatory action research and reflection skills.

The research therefore explored how both organisations changed their advocacy approaches and the organisational conditions affected by this. A self-assessment framework was developed to help the two organisations monitor and reflect on their own journey of learning through the process. A full description of research methods and results can be found in the report prepared by r e a c h included in appendix 3 of the report.

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<sup>3</sup> VAMP is the Veshya Anyay Mukti Parishad (Sex Workers Forum Against Injustice), a collective of sex-workers, of Sangram, a Maharashtra-based organisation working with sex-workers.

The research baseline study revealed struggles both organisations had getting beyond 'reactive advocacy' (see Appendix 4 for the evaluation's baseline studies). As the project focus changed to helping the groups work on 'proactive advocacy', the research followed how the process of collecting evidence and creating visualisations for different target audiences enabled this shift.



*Protest Signs at DMSC:*

*At the beginning of the project both DMSC's and WNU' advocacy focused on mobilising for protests*

### 3. Research findings

#### **1. Proactive strategy approaches foster better advocacy:**

At the beginning of the project we found that DMSC and WNU were primarily engaged in reactive advocacy – a response to a crisis which needs a quick response. They are surprisingly effective in 'rapid response', with an ability to quickly support a victim of violence and advocate on their behalf. They are also effective mobilisers, being able to draw large numbers of individuals to protests and events. However, long-term efforts to expose and discuss the victimisation of sex-workers, or influence law and policy on sex-work in their respective countries have been less effective.

What became apparent was a lack of expertise in aggregating evidence about victimisation and using it to make a clear statement about the reality of violence about sex-workers and monitor the abuses by those in power.

Tactical Tech therefore suggested that it might be useful to develop projects focused on communicating findings, resulting in the '*Atlas of Sex-Work*' – a series of visualisations of the evidence to engage different target audiences for the data. Identifying target audiences for advocacy based on the analysis of the evidence, and then developing visualisations for those audiences was found to be most relevant and useful.

The shift from **reactive** to **proactive** advocacy occurred through the process of **getting the groups to think about the kinds of information that would make a convincing argument** by

- Answering questions about their own data and how it resonates against anecdotal information gathered from the field.
- Asking organisations to follow the thread of how policies and laws directly related to the violence.
- Examining the connections between those who had the power to change these laws and people that could influence them.

**Both DMSC and WNU reported thinking more strategically, and with a better analysis of their own contexts, so as to convey convincing arguments to police, parliamentarians and other audiences.**

DMSC reports that for the first time they've been focused on identifying who their target audiences are. In addressing parliamentarians they've accumulated the list of names of the National Advisory Council (NAC) and key members of parliament who address policy on sex work. They tell r e a c h that they will use this information to lobby them specifically.

WNU finds that they now have a stronger position to speak from, and that having evidence of violence allows them to challenge official narratives about the conditions of sex-workers. WNU members report that having documentation makes their advocacy stronger and relieves them of having to organise marches and processions whose impact is unclear.

Tactical Tech found that both organisations responded more effectively to using their advocacy in a strategic way when presented with tangible examples from other efforts. Exposing DMSC and WNU to our increasingly growing library of visualisations used in advocacy was key, as was getting both organisations to examine existing data visualisations that were already in their offices.

However, this impact was eclipsed by the organisations being able to see their own data visualised.

With WNU, we were fortunate that they took initiative to start working with simple bar and pie charts of their data early on, and they quickly began to see the potential of the project. With DMSC, our first site visit with draft visualisations saw a turn in the amount of priority and investment of their own resources in this project.

## **2. Working with data enables new conversations with the community**

Improvement in WNU's and DMSC's relationships with sex worker communities was an unintended achievement. Not only did they cultivate trust during the data collection exercises, they also conveyed their relevance as advocates for sex workers in relation to the laws and violence perpetrated by a range of stakeholders. The process of data-collection also fostered communication about the violence sex-workers face, especially those types of violence that are taboo or difficult to articulate, such as interpersonal and intimate partner violence.

From r e a c h's evaluation report:

Almost all the respondents felt that **relationships with sex worker communities had improved**, particularly with those in remote provinces in Cambodia and districts in West Bengal. This unintended achievement will greatly improve the ability of DMSC and WNU to support their constituents across their coverage areas. DMSC felt that through the experience of TTC project survey they developed better understanding of how to approach the community. That is, prior to the intervention, DMSC met the community in case of a crisis. Now they have issued a directive to all branch offices that community members should be met regularly in their homes. Moreover, it was suggested in this directive that DMSC members conduct home visits in teams. Before conducting the survey, DMSC guidelines on interpersonal violence were unknown to sex workers, especially those in provinces outside of Kolkata. This has now changed.

According to one respondent, **many sex workers did not know that verbal abuse is also violence and that if a Babu beats a sex worker that is also violence. After the TTC project, when community leaders went to the field every day to collect data, they raised awareness.** Similarly, in Cambodia, the survey provided an opportunity for WNU to raise awareness about violence against sex workers, among community members. They took steps to develop trust and raise awareness about how advocacy is used to protect their rights. Not surprisingly, awareness of violence against sex workers was enhanced among both staff and community members themselves, as a result of the data collection process. In both DMSC and WNU, the questions provoked discussions about violence, support for eliminating violence and the need for prevention strategies.

In describing the achievements of the TTC intervention, two senior staff reported: *We learned that visiting homes to collect data led to personal conversations. This encouraged sharing since sex workers began sharing openly. As a learning from this process, we asked Branch offices in districts to form teams which can meet individual sex workers regularly to know about their issues. Sex workers have begun to rely on us as they have developed confidence that we will not disclose information about them and that we will help them in the process.*

*“Every time we talked about why we want to conduct the questionnaire we talked to them about the anti-trafficking law. We advocated for the government to take actions against anti-traffickers not against the sex workers themselves.”* While some secretariat members indicated that there had been a reduction in violence as a result of the survey, this was not corroborated by government officials.

In both Cambodia and India, communities in remote areas learned about WNU and DMSC services which they had not known before

DMSC and WNU became **aware of characteristics and extent of violence** that exist. Interestingly, while several peer-reviewed studies exist, particularly in DMSC itself, DMSC staff had not been aware of the trends and complexities related to violence as illustrated in these journal articles. **It was not until they collected and analyzed their own data, that they became aware of these highly contextual aspects of the data.** For example, several respondents in DMSC indicated that they were not aware of the perpetrators of violence. For example, they were not aware that police were most frequently cited violence offenders.



*I found that after the survey on violence, there was an increase in reporting of violence cases which led to higher number of redressals.... The survey created trust and confidence in the community that DMSC could keep the information confidential and support them in cases of violence. **This survey was different because it was the first survey on violence done in a systematic manner and by sex workers themselves.** WNU Staff member*

In addition to general awareness of the problem of violence, sex worker communities started becoming aware of the advocacy and services provided by WNU and DMSC respectively. In both West Bengal and Cambodia, community members were somewhat distrustful of the interviewers but with time they gained trust in the interviewers and the interview processes. Communities learned that DMSC and WNU played important roles in supporting them against violence. In the case of WNU, it eventually led to an advocacy strategy in which community members were able to partake.

### **3. Community-owned information versus Open Data**

When working with grassroots groups on using information for advocacy, questions arise about the place and relevance of community-aggregated and community-owned data. What are the uses and benefits of such small-scale, focused data collection by groups like DMSC and WNU, should there be more connection and communication to larger data movements, if at all, such as the open data movement? What are their differences and issues in knowledge production and management and what do they mean for advocacy more generally?

Data, and 'open data' in particular, has become a valuable resource for civil society organisations, journalists and advocates working on transparency and to monitor corruption, abuse and violations. Open data is information from and about public institutions and becomes a key source of information for evidence-based advocacy. In many parts of the world, information about, and from, public institutions is usually accessible online. In many parts of the global south there are open data initiatives for advocacy, such as [Ichangemycity.com](http://Ichangemycity.com), [praja.in](http://praja.in), [knowyourmp.com](http://knowyourmp.com), and the [Kenya Budget Tracker](http://Kenya Budget Tracker).<sup>4</sup>

The open data movement means little to DMSC and WNU. For one, there are very few open data platforms in India and Cambodia, and those that do exist focus on public services, urban infrastructure and governance, government spending and so on. However, open data initiatives could have been useful for DMSC and WNU, if they had access to them.

DMSC wanted to do a micro-project around commercial land use, ownership and sale in West Bengal, information about which was extremely difficult to collect. Violence, threats and harassment from thugs and gangs in Calcutta had led DMSC to investigate who exactly they were. They seemed to represent local land and commercial property developers. DMSC had already been documenting cases of evictions of sex-workers and encroachments on brothel areas and found that in one urban location, the southern Tollygunge area, malls and office buildings had come up in areas where sex-workers had been evicted from. They had a hunch that brothels in Calcutta that were once on the outskirts of the city are now, as the city has expanded, fairly central and are located in what is now considered valuable urban land.

They suggested that we develop a micro-project that would expose land ownership, sale and eventual development in order to expose the politics behind the threats and evictions of sex workers. However, there was little by way of a causal link between the violence and the land acquisitions. Moreover, the zoning and regulations in the law around where sex-work can and cannot be practiced (for example, there cannot be sex-work locations within a certain distance of schools or religious shrines) was being used as a way to push sex-worker communities away and give land over to commercial developers. Eventually, considering the scale of this problem in Calcutta and West Bengal, we developed a project to imply a correlation between the pandemic of evictions of the urban poor and the land grabbing and development that followed it, implicating both the state and the land-mafia. By framing this as a wider issue, we hoped that the micro-

<sup>4</sup> <http://twaweza.org/uploads/flash/budget-visualization-kenya-ooo/Kenya.html#/home/viewType=Bubbles&spending=Actual&year=2010-11&split=Purpose>



project would enable the inclusion of sex-workers into the category of the urban poor and show the similarities, rather than the differences, between sex-workers and other marginalised communities especially street hawkers and vendors who also ply their trade on the streets. This was a strategy to address the particular kinds of stigmatisation sex-workers face.

An open government platform about land use and sale in the state would have been a logical starting point. Similarly, crime records bureau figures on violence against women, or about migration and trafficking could have been extremely useful for DMSC and WNU to compare their data against, ask questions of and reveal inconsistencies in.

The basis of open data assumes that information is available and that it can be shared; of course, in the case of marginalised groups, information about their issues is not even visible so this isn't really a possibility. However, community-based groups could be supported to use different kinds of open data that do exist in order to develop their advocacy materials. Open data platforms could be useful for advocacy across the social justice spectrum, and there can only be more efforts to support this in the global South. If more public data was open, more grassroots groups could learn to make use of it to contextualise their advocacy. So, in the case of the land project suggested to DMSC, mentioned above, they could have worked with open data platforms on land-use and ownership had they existed. Similarly, WNU will be using data from reports compiled by other NGOs, research centres and public records on trafficking and sex-work, but have had to manually go through reports after searching for them. This in itself could be raised if data was in the first instance public, but would create a good yardstick for the organisation's own desk collection efforts.

DMSC and WNU's data-collection efforts were extremely beneficial to the two groups themselves, not just in terms of their own projects and work, but in building confidence and skills. Data collection about sex-workers is not new in either of these two locations. DMSC is one of the first sentinel surveillance sites for recording HIV prevalence in the sex-worker community and continues to be. The National AIDS Control Organisation of India receives their data directly, and DMSC's data contributes to national statistics on HIV/AIDS figures. Sex work in Cambodia has been studied by researchers working on migration, trafficking, HIV/AIDS prevention.

However, these are programs led by, developed and conducted by external agencies for their own purposes, with little involvement or ownership of the data by the sex-work community. The formats in which data will be collected and how it will be used are predetermined, so even if sex-workers are involved in data collection, they have little say about what will be collected, how it will be used, or even have access to it.

This project put sex-workers **at the centre of the data collection process** as well as the discussions and decision-making around what the data would be used for. r e a c h's evaluations found that both DMSC and WNU were **significantly empowered to lead their own data-collection processes**. This also means that the nature of what questions get asked changes significantly, and that the nature of what information about sex-workers is created, changes too.

## 4. Fulfilment of objectives

The project aimed to contribute to a situation where sex workers and their organisations are empowered to better prevent, respond to and address situations of abuse, violations and discrimination. The general objective is **‘To learn whether and how digital documentation techniques can best improve documentation and reporting of violations against sex workers as well as internal communication and advocacy by members of the sex workers’ organisations WNU & DMSC.’**

Both DMSC and WNU have benefited from the process of collecting, analysing and visualising information for use in their advocacy work. Both organisations have shown that local communities of sex-workers can be involved in and own the process of data collection, and convey its results through audience-focused visual graphics for advocacy around sex-worker rights.

Through this project, both organisations have gained a strong, new perspective on strategic, as opposed to reactive, advocacy and the skills to take this forward across other project within the organisation.

Detailed below are the objectives and a description of how they have been fulfilled.

1. **Implementation:** *Providing DMSC and WNU with techniques and skills to use documentation and evidence of violations effectively in advocacy campaigns and enabling the two organisations to adopt approaches to collecting new data and repackaging old data.*

Both organisations have collected data, analysed it themselves, connected the results to their advocacy campaigns and developed information graphics (infographics) for different audiences. DMSC has created five separate infographics specifically designed to appeal and influence: Parliamentarians (MPs and MLAs elected to the central and state governments respectively), Pradhans, or rural government officials, Police Commissioners and the General Public (including media and sex workers). In doing this, **DMSC state that they have been able to take their first steps towards strategic evidence-based advocacy.**

WNU has learned how to analyse their data and talk about it with others and how to develop in-depth surveys that support their advocacy goals. They have also been able to aggregate information from government, research centres and other external agencies for use in their advocacy campaigns. For example, their infographics challenging the anti-trafficking law will show the discrepancies in figures and definitions (of trafficking) compiled in reports from UN agencies, government statistics and other local Cambodian NGOs. They have also begun to leverage new relationships with other organisations and institutions interested in using preliminary draft visualisations of their evidence. Their first attempts at visualising the data have been met with some success. They have also compiled their audio and video recordings into a short film about the raids (called 'rescues' by the authorities) on sex-workers under the Anti-Trafficking program and the resulting human rights violations of sex workers. The film calls for the Cambodian government and the Parliamentarian to amend this law, while asking the donors, religious/church, fundamentalist feminist and NGOs, who claim to be rescuers, to stop harming sex-workers and supporting the right to work of adult and voluntary sex workers.

2. **Impact assessment:** *determining how visualisations of data obtained through documentation and evidence gathering change the approach to creating advocacy campaigns on mistreatments faced by sex workers.*

At the start of the project, DMSC was adamant that police violence against sex-workers in Calcutta had decreased as a result of meetings and negotiations with police commissioners, but that violence in rural districts remained high. However, after analysing their data, DMSC was able to

identify that the police are the greatest perpetrators of violence against sex workers, even in Calcutta, and **have subsequently re-prioritised their advocacy campaigns accordingly.**

**They now have a focused and targeted approach for different audiences and stakeholders.**

WNU has learned about the power of having their own data as there are now more confident in confronting the police and communicating with policy makers about the impacts of the anti-trafficking law. They are also forging partnerships and collaborations with government ministries and NGOs who want to make use of their data. They have also developed ideas for three different visualisations of their data for distinct audiences and stakeholders.

3. **Evaluation:** Assessing how regular self-evaluation and review might be refined to make the project more effective.

**To support the participatory action and research (PAR) component of this project, WNU, DMSC and Tactical Tech/rea c h developed their own self-assessment tools,** with the support of the evaluation team (see attached Appendix 6). The first and last self-assessments were facilitated by the evaluators. Other team members facilitated the exercises on the other occasions. As a result, there was inconsistency in reporting and data outputs.

The table below is DMSC's self-assessment framework. At the start of the process, rea c h worked with DMSC to develop their 'dream' outcome of the project and then DMSC was to identify how this dream would be realised, the actions that would serve as indicators of how the dream had become a reality, or had been integrated into the 'lifestyle' of the organisation. The same process was carried out with WNU. See Appendix 6 for a full description of how DMSC and WNU developed their self-assessment frameworks and regularly implemented and updated it.

|   | Practices  | Level 1<br>Knowledge  | Level2<br>Reaction   | Level 3<br>Action  | Level 4<br>Systematic   | Level 5<br>Lifestyle   |
|---|--|---|--|--|---|--|
| 1 | <b>Methodology of documentation (aggregating, collating, visually representing information)</b>              | We have knowledge and do documentation but do not have the capacity or processes to use the documentation for advocacy purposes | We are equipped and have aggregated, collated data for both micro projects | We will do some priority issues related to SRBs & mainly in Kolkata        | SRB's becomes the sites where data on violence is regularly collected and published | Part of standard response in DMSC, documentation for all projects feeding into advocacy outputs and strategies |
| 2 | <b>Tailoring information or data for specific audience(Police , Policy maker, Public, Media, Sex worker)</b> |   | Need based, not regular  | We are drafting information pieces for target audiences and trial-ing them | Regular use of information for target audience                                      | Advocacy has a positive desired impact on target audience  |
| 3 | <b>Capacity for evidence based advocacy in DMSC</b>  | There is a lack of skills+ awareness of this kind of advocacy but data exists.  | Have the skills and awareness that can be applied.                         | We will develop advocacy message and simple visualisations                 |   | Everybody knows how to collect , collate & package information for target audience in campaign                 |

DMSC Table Cont.

|   | Practices  | Level 1<br>Knowledge  | Level2<br>Reaction  | Level 3<br>Action  | Level 4<br>Systematic  | Level 5<br>Lifestyle  |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|---|
| 4 | <b>Eviction regulated in sex work sites</b>                        |   | When threats are made, DMSC has a rapid response mechanism to support sex workers | Regular system of monitoring where evictions are happening and details are recorded during the rapid response. | <b>We will become more proactive using the data they get from the monitoring</b> | Sex workers are able to voice their rights not to be evicted+ perpetrators know evidence has been collected |
| 5 | <b>Resource mobilisation (people, capacity building, finances)</b> |   | Responding and working only with regular funding                                  |  | <b>Steady flow of fund</b>   | Total funding for completion, sharing+ replication+ human resource management+ data entry design            |
| 6 | <b>Reflective Practice</b>   | We feel the need for reflective practice on the project progress but do not know how to do it | We have heard about self-assessment tool but do not practice it                   | <b>We use self-assessment tool regularly(every six months) in the Kolkata office</b>                           | We use self-assessment tool in both Kolkata office and districts                 | We regularly use self-assessment tool for all our projects in DMSC  |

An analysis of the self-assessment events revealed that staff in both WNU and DMSC critically analysed their work on two to three occasions since the project began. In each event, they used the self-assessment tool to guide them. **In some cases they developed action points based on lessons learned.**

The evaluation team provided on-site support on the initial and last self-assessment exercises and tool development. The evaluation team observed staff and community members - at WNU and DMSC sites - engaged in self-reflection and critical analysis which led to deeper understanding of their work.

**Both the DMSC and WNU teams felt the tool and self-assessment exercises were of great value.** For example, WNU recognized their need to expand their advocacy approaches beyond a confrontational approach they formerly relied on. Specifically, WNU determined the need to shift approaches as a primary concern during their first self-assessment exercise, particularly in their discussions related to WNU's vision. During that session, WNU advisors and secretariat members determined a need to acquire relationship-building skills to engage in cooperative advocacy approaches.

***"Through the self-assessment tool we came to know where we stand. I liked it because we are assessing ourselves, not outsiders who are evaluating us."***

DMSC and WNU both increased their ratings– by two to three out of five points (each point relates to a level in the self-assessment framework) - over the course of a year in relation to documentation and survey capacities. According to them, regular data collection is taking place in DMSC and both organizations have capacities to conduct surveys with moderate support from external experts.

As stated by a DMSC staff member:

***"Progress is that we are at least collecting data at the districts which we hadn't done before."***

In relation to advocacy, both WNU (in campaigns) and DMSC (eviction regulation) rated improvements, with up to two points. WNU used data in their campaigns and claimed that violence and arrests have reduced.

Similarly, in DMSC one staff member reported:

*“While the [eviction] threats are still there, they have been able to stop and regulate eviction at sex worker sites.”*

In the final self-assessment DMSC reduced their rating in evidence-based advocacy. They did so recognizing that they had rated themselves too high, since they had not yet tested the visualisations. According to DMSC staff member,

*“We don’t have skills to tailor it for police. But we are using data collected for policy level advocacy, especially repeal of ITPA” (Immoral Trafficking [Prevention] Act)*

Relationship-building shifted only slightly. DMSC felt they needed to collaborate with partners and other stakeholders more effectively. WNU feel their relationship with others have improved, but have further to go. WNU rated themselves presently at 3.25 at the final review which they had increased from one. WNU staff regularly attend meetings called by different stakeholders. They realize that more needs to be done, particularly with government agencies who continue to object to the demand for recognizing sex work as work.

In terms of evaluation and reflection, the teams felt they made substantial progress since they were not aware of evaluation practices. They increased ratings of approximately three points over one year. **The evaluation team helped DMSC and WNU apply the tool beyond the boundaries of the Tactical Tech project. WNU requested support in developing an organization-wide self-assessment framework.** They also developed self-assessment tools for partner organizations. On one occasion, WNU facilitated the self-assessment exercise on their own, in which staff and secretariat members spent the entire day engaged in self-analysis. Both WNU and DMSC demonstrated confidence and commitment to integrate in organizational practice.

As one of the lead figures in the WNU secretariat indicated,

*“I will take this tool with me everywhere. It’s very dear to us. We find it easier than before. And, useful to learn where we are now and where we can go. It is helpful because it teaches us to analyse ourselves and we don’t need money to hire external evaluators.”*

We found that WNU built its evaluation capacity substantially as they now rated themselves lower, realising that they have not fully engaged in evaluative thinking and learning. During the final self-assessment they reflected on the tendency to rate themselves higher than they actually were. Thus, this sparked long and intense discussions on each practice which cultivated deeper understandings of the issues and motivated the team to make an action plan.

The Tactical Tech and reach teams developed a common self-assessment framework in November 2011, during a face to face meeting. The evaluation team facilitated a subsequent session on Skype in Jan and March 2012. They observed several changes in transferring the intervention in and beyond the Tactical Tech project, as they included their colleagues in the learning opportunities.

The Tactical Tech team increased their rating to level three from level one in relation to the success with the DMSC and WNU visualisations, one being that DMSC have offered to use their own funds for translation of visualisations into Hindi and Bengali.

In the area of evaluative thinking, the team felt they moved from level two to level four, as the Tactical Tech team felt the significance of being responsible for the self-assessment sessions to take place. Tactical Tech cited many examples of how the self-assessment sessions are particularly important for project partners, including:

*I felt doing self-assessment in DMSC really helped us answer the question “is it worthwhile?” I could only get at the changes when we did this [self-assessment] exercise. I*

*now see the value in doing it because it is a way of documenting changes.*

4. **Replicability:** *Identifying aspects of the intervention that may have relevance for other sex worker organisations or similar marginalised communities.*

Tactical Tech will be incorporating these findings as a set of case studies and how-to's based on its work through this project. One of the main platforms for writing up case studies and compiling how-to's will be the Data and Design Guide, which will be ready by September 2012. Since January 2012, we have been serially releasing [chapters](#) from this guide on our visualisation website [Drawing by Numbers](#). We will also be using data collected by DMSC and WNU to do simple visualisations using data visualisation tools on the Drawing by Numbers website.

5. **Communication:** *Communicating study findings and recommendations to the intended beneficiaries of the research, in particular sex worker organisations, academic and other target audiences*

As we are just finishing the project, we have not had proper opportunity to communicate the study findings to intended beneficiaries, however the following activities have taken place;

- In December 2011, Maya Indira Ganesh attended an event organised by Point of View, Mumbai and FAT – Feminist Approach to Technology, called Women in Science and Technology. At this two day seminar in Bombay, women from academia, NGOs and civil society working with technologies in different capacities presented their work. We presented this project and talked about the use of information and technology in visual advocacy.
- In July, 2012, DMSC will be sharing it's visualisations with other Sex-worker advocacy organisations at the International AIDS Society's conference on HIV/AIDS. This conference will be hosted by DMSC in Calcutta, and will be run parallel to the main conference being held in Washington DC at the same time.
- WNU will be screening a short film at the same conference mentioned above. They have made using information collected through this project, about the human rights violations on sex-workers through the implementation of the anti-trafficking law in Cambodia

## 5. Project design and implementation

This project had two parts – first, to support two sex-worker collectives to use their information in refining advocacy strategies, and second, an evaluation component that tracked the effects of this collaboration.

After a change in the direction of the project, from supporting sex-worker groups to use digital documentation techniques, the project shifted focus to the use of information aggregated by DMSC and WNU in evidence-based advocacy. The research part of the project used baseline and endline studies, and developed a self-reflective framework expecting all project partners to regularly map their evolution through the project.

The project design as envisioned in our initial proposal looks very different than the actual implementation. The only elements that were retained in the initial project plan were the assessment site visits. As a result of conducting the assessments with DMSC and WNU, where we learned about their documentation efforts, their advocacy approaches and their current use of technologies, the project went on a different path as Tactical Tech determined ways to be most effective with its intervention.

Here is a brief summary of all the activities undertaken towards the final project design and implementation:

| Quarter / Year               | Activities   |
|------------------------------|--|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selecting project partners and research partners: VAMP, Sangli and IDS, Brighton.</li> <li>Finalisation of new partners</li> </ul>  |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter 2010 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A week-long site visit and needs-assessment with DMSC Calcutta.</li> <li>Interviewed members of advocacy team, DMSC senior management, members of the USHA micro-finance co-operative, the Self-Regulatory Boards, drop-in centre managers, field workers, theatre troupe, newsletter department and IT team were interviewed.</li> <li>DMSC's documentation within the organisation and with external partners and stakeholders were extensively reviewed.</li> <li>Met r e a c h in Delhi, the new research associate on the project.</li> </ul>  |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2010 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Atlas of Sex-work concept and Micro-projects developed for DMSC.</li> </ul>   |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2010 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>r e a c h conducts baseline assessment with DMSC</li> <li>r e a c h conducts interviews with different teams and departments within DMSC.</li> <li>Self-assessment framework for participatory action research and evaluation introduced.</li> <li>TTC does introductory workshop on evidence based advocacy with DMSC</li> <li>Planning meeting at DMSC to organise workflows for completion of each micro-project</li> <li>Five-day site visit and needs assessment with WNU, in Phnom Penh.</li> <li>Interviews with the WNU Secretariat, field workers, sex-workers conducted</li> <li>WNU's documentation and data collection processes reviewed.</li> <li>Tactical Tech develops the Atlas of Sex-work concept and micro-projects for WNU.</li> </ul> |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter 2010 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DMSC sends in all their data about violence experienced by sex-workers for the period January – October 2010.</li> <li>Based on data collected, Tactical Tech does a workshop with DMSC in planning visual graphics, working with the data and planning next steps on the completion of the micro-project titled 'Who Victimises Sex Workers'.</li> <li>Brief for designers developed around five information visualisations in poster-format with DMSC data.</li> </ul>  |

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
|                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DMSC and Tactical Tech decide to work on one more micro-project related to commercial land ownership, evictions of sex-workers and violence by land mafia thugs.</li> <li>An information designer is commissioned to develop graphics based on DMSC data.</li> </ul>   |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter 2011 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tactical Tech and the Information Designer visit DMSC to finalise visual layouts for the five information graphics about violence against sex-workers.</li> <li>2 day workshop at DMSC to plan data collection for the second micro-project on the correlation between commercial land ownership, evictions of sex-workers and violence from land-mafia thugs.</li> <li>Information designer makes preliminary visualisations to analyse and understand the DMSC data.</li> </ul>  |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2011 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tactical Tech organises a workshop with WNU's outreach workers on creating survey tools for data collection, led by Chor Chantyda from Cambodian Centre for Human Rights. Two survey tools were created for data collection to support the advocacy campaigns on 'Stop Raid and Rescue' and 'Sex Work is Work'.</li> <li>Tactical Tech organises a second workshop for WNU on using video and audio for interviewing, facilitated by Sok Vibol.</li> <li>Tactical Tech contracts Mediashala, a known and trusted organisational partner, after the information-designer contracted earlier, falls sick and could not work on the project.</li> </ul> |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2011 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WNU collects data about victimisation of sex-workers during police raids and detention under the Anti-Trafficking Law.</li> <li>WNU collects information about economic conditions of sex-workers around the micro-project on 'sex work is work'.</li> <li>After identifying errors in their survey tool, WNU revises it tools and collects data again.</li> <li>WNU requests a no-cost extension of the project owing to the revising of the survey tool.</li> <li>Key WNU staff person working on the project transitions to another project (within WNU) on providing legal aid to sex workers.</li> </ul>  |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter 2011 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Face to Face meeting between r e a c h and Tactical Tech to discuss research component.</li> <li>r e a c h and TTC work on the self-assessment tool for both organisations.</li> <li>Tactical Tech visits DMSC for feedback on draft visualisations from Mediashala.</li> </ul>  |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter 2012 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complications and time restraints at DMSC cause delays in finishing the English to Bengali translations of the visualisations.</li> </ul>  |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2012 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tactical Tech makes a final visit to WNU to conduct a workshop to analyse their data and develop a design brief for their visualisations.</li> <li>r e a c h conducts final endline interviews with WNU in Phnom Penh and DMSC in Calcutta.</li> </ul>   |

### ***Engaging DMSC and WNU on their data***

As you can see from the above chart, a key objective in the implementation of the project after the introduction of the Atlas of Sex Work concept became focused on engaging DMSC and WNU on understanding and analysing the data they had/were collecting.

Several site visits were focused on making the connections between the evidence that had been collected and the current advocacy goals of the organisations. Both organisations were asked to work and handle data during site visits and answer the following questions:



- How did the evidence support their advocacy goals? Was it compelling enough to make a case for sex-worker rights?
- What did the evidence actually say about violence against sex-workers? Who were the perpetrators and what regions were the most dangerous?
- What data would be of particular interest to key stakeholders, such as local officials, elected representatives, & existing/potential allies.

Our site visits also centred on showing other examples of visualisations of data, particularly infographics that had been used in advocacy. In turn Tactical Tech asked for them to find and share local examples of infographics. By doing this the group was able to break down existing graphics into trying to come up with a process for how they were developed, how the data was sourced and visualised, to figure out the actual process of how information can be leveraged in different way to create advocacy messages.

As a result of focusing the site visits on connecting the data and advocacy, examining the data and sharing examples, we were able to develop design briefs for the infographics.

### ***Working with r e a c h on the Action Research Component***

In November 2011, we held a face-to-face meeting with r e a c h and worked on our own self-reflective tool. During the meeting we realised that there were key challenges for r e a c h in getting the organisations to use the self-reflective tool and also that we had made some unfortunate assumptions on how the research should be carried out.

We've relied on r e a c h to carry out the evaluative aspects of this project as stand-alone consultants. Since they were impartial and objective to the intervention that was going on, we assumed the research would be of higher quality. However, over the life of the project, DMSC and WNU have struggled with prioritising time to use the self-reflection tool and r e a c h has grappled with keeping up to date and understanding the intervention. We've realised that we could have gotten a greater amount of evaluation data if Tactical Tech had taken a greater role in engaging WNU and DMSC in use of the self-reflection tool as a part of the project activities rather than as a standalone component.

Despite this, both DMSC and WNU have expressed interest in utilizing self-reflective practices beyond the project, with WNU even requesting that r e a c h provide them with guidance on developing an organisational self-reflective tool for use beyond this project.

For Tactical Tech, the use of the self-reflective tool has been helpful in understanding the positive outcomes for the organisation. After long difficulties with DMSC, we began to understand how they had been impacted by the project and the organisational change that happened as a result, particularly around their advocacy strategies and the greater priority they'd given to documentation. This helped us feel that efforts and resources we put into DMSC weren't wasted.

### ***Partnerships with Canadians or with other researchers, and their usefulness in achieving the project's objectives***

Katherine O'Reilly of Simon Fraser University, who was introduced to Tactical Tech by IDRC, referenced this project in her paper on Cognitive Justice, 'Too Much Icing and Not Enough Cake.' An excerpt from the draft of her paper<sup>5</sup>.

“Much of the data being published by international organizations responds to indicators that were established decades ago in the context of the UN state system. As a result the data responds to a specific political geography that is state-based rather than issue specific. The data will also respond to an understanding of the issues that it greatly out of date. Since

<sup>5</sup> This version is from O'Reilly's draft dated August 2011. Tactical Tech is not yet in receipt of her final paper.

much of the value in statistical data resides in its ability to track trends over time, indicators reflect a certain conservatism, and statisticians can be reluctant to abandon them. What is more, the data is designed to be linear, comparative and time sequence, meaning that indicators reflect a set of assumptions about the nature of progress. This means that even when the data is made public, there are limits to how users will be able to apply it. Visualisations based on this data will tell stories that must always respond to a particular vision of progress, either by criticizing that vision, or by reinforcing it.

For example, the international NGO Tactical Tech is accompanying a sex worker's collective in Cambodia in the design of research for evidence-based advocacy. Project Coordinator Maya Indira Ganesh explains that the conditions for sex workers in Cambodia are very difficult right now thanks to a 'draconian' anti-trafficking law that criminalizes sex-workers. Advocates for sex workers in that country understand that in order to change the law, they need to change public perception. In order to do so, they need to both show how the law fails to achieve its ends, as well as the harm that it does in society. This requires the careful selection of indicators that will be easy to gather, measurable, inexpensive, easy to understand, and easy to visualize. So, for example, by gathering data about how long sex-workers spend in lock-up when they are arrested, they can show the impact of the law on the children of sex-workers, and also the ability of sex-workers to manage HIV by taking medications at the proper times. And by gathering data about the sorts of abuses suffered by sex-workers, they can demonstrate that landlords and police are the source of social ills rather than Johns and sex. Thus the collective is very clear on the story they need to tell, and they are selecting indicators that will help them to do so. (Interview Monday August 1, 2011) These are not the sorts of indicators that will be available in public accounts, but must be generated from the grassroots in response to specific circumstances."

Early on in the project, we were contacted by a Canadian journalist currently working with the Phnom Penh post who wanted to feature WNU's work. At the time the project had barely started and there was little to share, and done too early, the story could have taken the realities of WNU's struggle out of context. Once WNU's information graphics have been developed, they could have the journalist do a story on it. Tactical Tech is aware of the need for judiciousness in how this work is portrayed seeing as it involves issues around sex-work and official Cambodian government policy and the support of the Canadian government.

## 6. Project outputs and dissemination

As of the last report to IDRC, both DMSC and WNU agreed to do two projects each within the organising concept of the Atlas of Sex-Work. This section describes the current status of the outputs of the projects from these two groups.

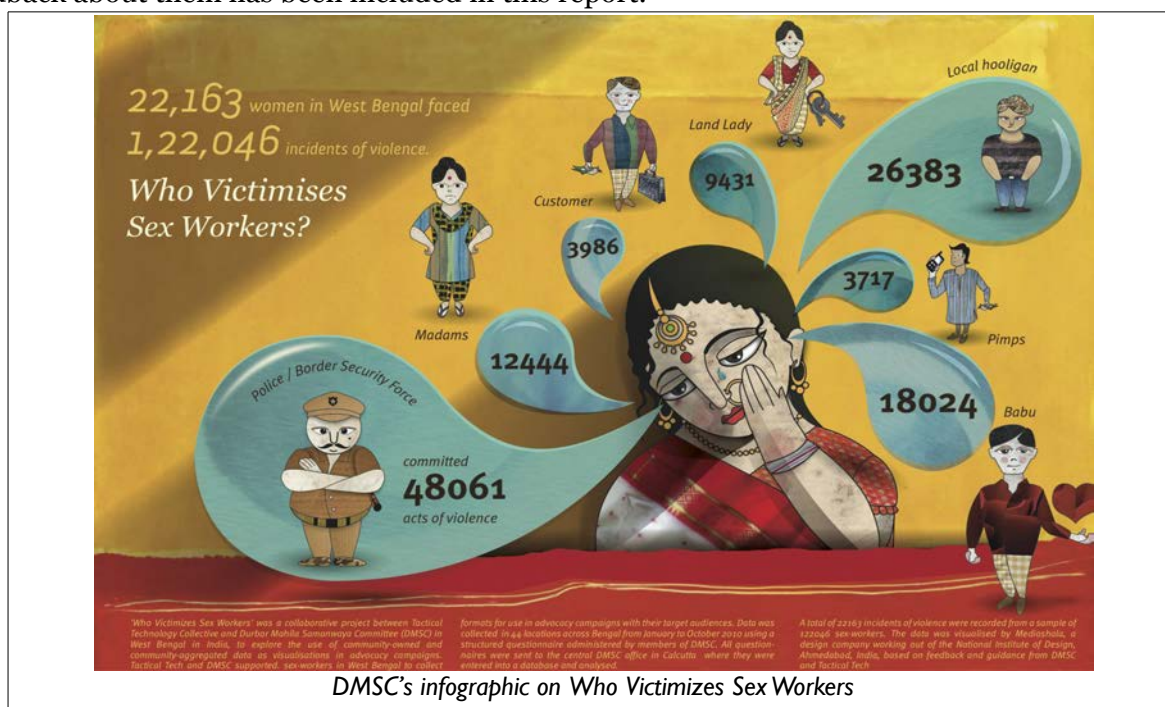
### DMSC's Infographics

DMSC's two projects were to be about:

- the extent and nature of the victimisation of sex-workers, and
- correlations between commercial land ownership, land grabbing and violence against the urban poor, including sex-workers.

Between January and October 2010, DMSC independently developed a structured questionnaire to record information about violations faced by sex-workers. It was administered by (sex-worker) field staff across 48 locations in West Bengal, resulting in data from more than 22,000 women. Tactical Tech worked with DMSC, and the Ahmedabad-based design firm, Mediashala, to create five infographics based on the questionnaire data. Three of these infographics were aimed at the police, MLAs (Members of the State Legislative Assembly) and Panchayat Pradhans (leaders of the local self-government under the [Panchayati Raj](#) decentralised rural administration), and two were aimed at general audiences, the media and sex-workers.

All five infographics are available in English, Hindi and Bengali. The English and Hindi versions are currently ready for print production and dissemination, however the Bengali versions still require a final sign-off by DMSC as they feel the text requires some revision. Owing to inordinate delays in finalisations of translations, DMSC was unable to get copies of the infographics to test with their external audiences. They have however been shared within DMSC quite extensively and feedback about them has been included in this report.



Implementation of the second micro-project relating to commercial land developments and sex worker evictions has been very illuminating in that it has demonstrated the challenges of accessing official information and data in India. DMSC were very enthusiastic about this micro-project and were very committed to the concept (see Annex 5 for an initial plan for micro projects). They had aggregated up to five case studies about evictions of sex-workers which they were keen to integrate

into their advocacy work. However, they weren't entirely clear how this would be possible, or exactly what kind of advocacy messages they could develop in the absence of other hard data about land use and land ownership. Essentially, they wanted to hinge the project around fairly limited and narrow data without being able to conceive of a broader, more compelling storyline. We suggested that they find data about the broader context of land ownership in areas where evictions were taking place, as DMSC suspected that the local land mafia were interested in evicting sex-workers from brothel locations and taking over their lands.

So, over a week in Calcutta in January 2011, Tactical Tech spent time with DMSC carefully planning the kinds of data needed for this micro-project and investigated where additional information could be accessed from. However, the project staff had little to no exposure working with information on land-use and ownership and weren't successful finding the information they needed. Another hurdle we faced is that land use and ownership data is not widely available online as this information is not (yet) digitised. Getting information from a variety of different sources – citizens' action groups (West Bengal has seen a strong public response to the sale of public and agricultural land by the State to corporations), public libraries, NGOs, bureaucrats, even online through scanning public tenders – was not something they could manage as it involved a lot of time spent in investigative research that was beyond their capacity and time.

Given that India has enacted the Right to Information Act (RTI), we tried to support DMSC to explore how RTI applications may be used to access information about commercial land developments in and around sex worker sites. So we put DMSC in touch with local Calcutta-based and state-wide NGOs who routinely use RTI (Right to Information) requests to access public data and information, but this requires persistent follow-up, which DMSC was unable to commit to.

After spending 2-3 months trying to aggregate information, DMSC reported that they were unsuccessful in collecting information about land use and sale. At this point, we jointly decided to shelve this micro-project. We were also aware that both time and money for the project was running out: the project was ending and staff salaries were not being paid beyond March 2011, which considerably narrowed the window of time to access information for this micro-project.

Given that they already had a significant amount of data collected for the first micro-project on victimisation of sex-workers, we decided to focus instead on our priority to help them create useful infographics based on that data. DMSC had a large dataset so we were able to create five infographics out of just one issue.

### ***WNU's Infographics***

In a workshop in May 2011, WNU developed the survey tools and underwent trainings in using audio and video tools for data collection. They then went on to use the survey, twice, with changes the second time around; they also did audio recordings of sex-workers talking about their experiences of doing sex-work and the impact of the Anti-Trafficking Law. This was intended to be used in a micro-project on 'sex work as work'. However, these recordings have not yet been integrated into current plans for developing advocacy materials. For one, over 100 recordings exist, none of which have been translated into English, so it has not been possible for us to work with this material. Moreover, WNU took longer than anticipated to organise and complete their data collection, asking for a six month extension on the project timeline. This meant that they have had no time to integrate the audio recordings into the micro-projects.

However, WNU could still aggregate the recordings into a simple map or other online platform, but beyond the timeline of this project. They have already indicated that they will be using audio recordings on radio shows on FIRE (Feminist International Radio Endeavour) and the Worker's Information Centre radio program. They will also be using the audio and video recordings on their own YouTube channels. There is also a new human rights channel on YouTube that is overseen by the international organisation, Witness that they host their content on

WNU's two micro-projects are about:

- a) sex work as a livelihoods choice sex-workers make given the limited resources and skills they have
- b) the abuses sex-workers face at the hands of the police who are empowered by the Cambodian Anti-Trafficking law

In an intensive five-day workshop in Phnom Penh in May 2012, we worked with WNU to aggregate all the information we would require to brief the designers to create the infographics. We put together their survey data with the advocacy messages they had composed for the two micro-projects and discussed the kinds of visuals they'd like to see on each infographic.

In this workshop, the WNU team developed complete ideas for three infographics for the micro-projects listed above. At the time of writing this report, Mediashala have been briefed on the three infographics and are preparing draft infographics for review by WNU. The advocacy messages underwent more rigorous testing in light of the survey data that had been collected and required some re-working.

They are:

- **“Rescue us from the Rescuers”**: This graphic is about the reality of what happens to sex workers during police 'rescue' missions. It has two parts to it; the first uses data from a range of independent and government sources to show that sex workers are not being trafficked, as the law assumes; the second part is based on data about the violence sex workers face at the hands of the police when they're arrested under the Anti-Trafficking Law.
- **“Your Law Brings Us More Problems, Not Solutions”**: This visual is supposed to show how the Anti-Trafficking Law is one more difficult reality in the life of a sex worker. Sex workers are already in a state of poverty and debt bondage. The law further marginalises and discriminates against them, and pushes them further into debt.
- **“Not Being Rescued from Poverty”**: This graphic shows why sex-workers need to be rescued from poverty, not prevented from doing work – by the Anti-Trafficking Law – that allows them to take care of their families. This graphic uses information about sex-workers' income and expenditure.

### ***Reviewing the Atlas of Sex-work***

The Atlas of Sex-Work concept (refer Appendix 5) was well received within Tactical Tech as a way of understanding how we could organise and present a series of visual advocacy outputs. For both DMSC and WNU the concept of the Atlas of Sex Work was less important than the focus on data itself, the visual outputs and the examination of the role of evidence in their advocacy. The concept may be picked up again by either group if they continue to engage in documentation projects and their approach to its use in advocacy continues to evolve.

## 7. Capacity-building

### *Institutional Reinforcement*

In every visit that Tactical Tech made we conducted small, intensive workshops with core project staff of DMSC and WNU towards skills building to achieve the objectives of the project. This included the following:

- Sessions on understanding and analysing visual advocacy and the use of evidence in campaigns from around the world.
- Planning for strategic evidence-based advocacy in consonance with the core advocacy goals of the organisation.
- Mapping and understanding audiences.
- Developing advocacy messages for target audiences.
- Learning how to read and understand the visualisations used in campaigns and advocacy
- Developing formats for the visualisations/outputs: working with an information designer to bring together existing data, advocacy messages for specific target audiences in an accessible visual format.

With WNU, Tactical Tech was able to significantly influence the core secretariat to improve their approaches to advocacy and in the development of new advocacy strategies. During the needs assessment, WNU clearly stated that they felt their advocacy work needed support, and through the implementation of the project we have supported them to significantly change their approach to advocacy.

**WNU has progressed from only talking about large scale actions and protests to influence policies, to talking about use of evidence as an advocacy tool and working with other allied organisations.**

With DMSC, Tactical Tech's focus was on using the data they had already gathered (their data collection began before the March 2010 needs assessment and site visit made by us) and using it in their advocacy. Up until now DMSC's approach to advocacy has not used any of their existing documentation and data, so **this approach has given them a new perspective on how to improve their advocacy.**

### *Data Collection Skills Building*

In May 2011, workshops conducted with WNU focused on preparing them to collect evidence to back their campaigns.

The first workshop, led by the Cambodian Centre for Human Rights (CCHR) focused on creating a survey tool to collect data for both their campaigns. This involved 20 members of WNU's outreach team, primarily sex-workers, both female and transgendered. CCHR gave guidance on creating the survey and also how to collect the information.

The second workshop focused on training WNU to conduct interviews using audio and video. Each workshop gave WNU skills that had previously only been deployed by actors from external organisations who were ultimately in control of the outputs.

**These two workshops gave WNU the skills to gather their own data and use it for their own purposes without the interference of external agendas.** Evidence of WNU's commitment to their own capacity-building and development can be read into their decision to revise the questionnaire they developed with CCHR's assistance, and conduct a second round of data collection as they felt the first questionnaire was not really addressing their advocacy objectives.

We've also found that one of WNU's staff, Luy Chan Dana has developed as a strong project member who has facilitated all aspects of the data collection, management and analysis. While Dana has always had strong IT skills, through this project she has developed her skills in working with a data for evidence-based advocacy.

We've also been happy to note that Nay Heng, who we first met through the Info-Activism Camp held in 2009, was a part of this project till he transitioned to leadership of a new legal advocacy project within WNU. His management, confidence and overall skills in the area have significantly increased over the years of our association with him.



*The WNU Outreach Team works with print outs of the spreadsheets containing the data collected from their survey efforts*

### ***Technology Use Skills Building***

After the initial assessment revealed that both organisations needed to focus on using their documentation rather than collecting it, we shifted away from an objective of focusing on digital documentation technologies. However, this did not mean that we shied away from technology use completely, instead we focused on appropriate technology to help them achieve their advocacy goals. We looked to pragmatic use of technology, rather than pin its success on extending computers to all branches, combating erratic connectivity, or the creation of uniform levels of computer literacy. Certainly both organisations worked heavily with spreadsheets during this project.

In the case of DMSC, as an institution, their in-house tech capacity was greater and they had a fairly good understanding of using spreadsheets from processing epidemiological data and information for reporting on DMSC's public health programmes. Computers were not, however, used to capture and store information about mistreatment. This project did give them a unique opportunity for them to shift much of their collected data from paper-based ledgers to electronic format. Subsequently the spreadsheets became an integral part of their ability to analyse their data.

As the majority of WNU's staff are either current or former sex-workers and their main

responsibilities are not dependent on being computer literate at all, their in-house tech capacity was quite low. However, the members of the project team working on this project had an interest in working with computers and this project gave them an opportunity to do so. It also gave them an opportunity to hire Luy Chan Dana, who brought very strong IT skills with her. WNU also greatly benefitted from transferring their paper based evidence to spreadsheets. One immediate challenge for them was the use of non-standardised Khmer fonts on their computers, which led to problems with transferring their data to other programmes. Luckily this issue was identified early on and was rectified. WNU also used Excel's built-in functionality to produce graphs and pie-charts that were used to give some preliminary visualisations and was used for some initial leaflets highlighting increased violence against sex workers through implementation of the ATL and given to government officials.

The WNU project team also experimented with plotting the locations of police stations on Google maps and the entire outreach team of 20 individuals received training on using video cameras and audio recorders.

### ***Capacity Building of Marginalised Communities***

**WNU is staffed and managed by sex-workers, former sex-workers and transgender people. They have been involved in all stages of the project development, planning, implementation (including data-collection).** DMSC is staffed differently; the project staff and advocacy team are middle-managers and non-sex-workers. However, female sex-workers, who are field coordinators and peer-educators, were involved in the project development and planning, participated in capacity-building workshops and were tasked with data-collection. **As an organisation, DMSC is represented by the sex-worker community at the highest levels of its management, who have been involved in decision-making on this project.**

### ***Self-Evaluation Skills***

Both WNU and DMSC have learned a lot about themselves through the process of developing their own self-reflective tool and working with it over time. **Both organisations show a strong interest in integrated self-evaluation much more deeply into the workings of their organisations and are asking for support from r e a c h in doing so.**



## 8. Project management

Remote project management is always a struggle and we suffered from finding an effective communication platform that would work between face-to-face site visits. Certainly the face-to-face site visits with partners were productive and critical to moving the project along. As a result Tactical Tech conducted more site visits than originally planned for. This resulted in the scrapping of the planned project-wide face to face meeting.

**Tactical Tech's approach to remote management worked well with WNU as they managed with periodic communications and occasional site visits.** Agreed upon timelines and work-plans were largely adhered to. WNU kept Tactical Tech informed when they faced challenges, such as the issues with the original survey. The WNU site visits were very informal and relaxed. The secretariat was open and eager to answer questions and go through the exercises we asked of them.

The chair of WNU said at the end of one site visit

*"You are welcome anytime, you're not like our other partners who come with their own bag of potatoes."*[A reference to other international organisations who tend to impose projects rather than develop them collaboratively]

However our inability to speak Khmer meant these meetings were often longer as translation took a lot of time and we were oblivious to side conversations about whatever topics we were discussing. **Project management with WNU was significantly enabled by members of the Social Agenda for Change collective who support WNU.** (Social Agenda for Change is a collective housed in the same building as WNU and who support in their administrative and management tasks)

Project management with DMSC was challenged by a number of factors. **There were definite expectations from DMSC that Tactical Tech should act like an institutional funder rather than a project partner.** They expected and worked in a way that demanded a greater presence than Tactical Tech's capacity could allow. They were used to more formal interactions. As a large institution, DMSC seemed more opaque than most grassroots groups that Tactical Tech is used to dealing with.

Most of the DMSC project staff were in the dark about the issues around the internal administration of their budget and agreements made on the funding that was supplied. As a result, the project team developed mistrust and were increasingly disgruntled despite Tactical Tech's efforts to clarify and address many of the internal problems, particularly in relation to their pay. Problems in the receipt of funds by DMSC's Calcutta bank were not communicated to the staff who only knew that there was a delay in their payments.

The hierarchical nature of DMSC also meant that project staff had little to no decision making power and had to refer all project decisions to the top levels of DMSC's management, including the executive director. This also meant that project staff had little ownership of the project. In an organisation of 60,000 members and over 50 staff in their central Calcutta office alone, this means that decisions take a long time to be reached. Although project plans were developed for each micro-project, project staff did not ultimately have control over their time on the project; so even though Tactical Tech maintained a calendar and schedule, DMSC's project staff were often pulled into other projects by their program managers.

Project staff were also not entirely aware of the procedures within their own organisation and communication between different departments in DMSC impacted the timeline of the project. For example, once DMSC had aggregated their data, we were keen to take a look and analyse it before planning for a workshop around using the data in the development of visual advocacy outputs. This was held up for three months because the project staff needed to get clearance from an internal ethical review board before releasing the data to Tactical Tech. That the review board did not see Tactical Tech as a collaborating partner meant that they treated us as external agencies working with their data, when in fact, we were working with their data in order to help DMSC develop visual advocacy outputs for their own community and organisation. We are not entirely sure what the

benefit of this process eventually was: we were never contacted by the ethics review board nor asked to sign off on any terms of use of the data. What we were left with was a delay that was only exacerbated by local holidays when DMSC was unavailable for close to a month.

r e a c h's approach to action research was commendable, but they consistently struggled with keeping up with how the intervention adapted and evolved. Where Tactical Tech faltered was in integrating the evaluation element into the intervention. We should have taken a greater role on conducting self-reflective sessions with WNU and DMSC. We also should have had a better understanding of the undertakings of the research element itself and we later regretted not having an extensive face to face meeting with r e a c h at the beginning of the project.

It's also worth mentioning the role of relationship and trust building during this project. With both WNU and r e a c h, we worked with the same individuals throughout the project, this allowed collegiate relationships to develop that will continue after the life of the project. Transparency around how the objectives of the project competed with organisational priorities gave everyone an understanding of how the project activities fit in to day to day operations. With DMSC, trust-building was very difficult, both because of the nature of the institution, as noted above, but also as personnel changed significantly during the life of the project and there was a greater distance between the project staff and the decision makers in the organisation. Our collaboration with DMSC suffered greatly as a result of lack of trust.

## 9. Impact

Four very diverse organisations – DMSC, r e a c h, Tactical Tech and WNU – took on a considerable challenge with this project: to learn about the use of information and documentation through the implementation of evidence-based advocacy with grassroots communities.

The key impacts of the project on the organisations involved are:

- A significant shift from reactive to proactive advocacy strategies.
- Development of skills and understanding both in collecting evidence and using it in an effective fashion.
- New skills in analysing data resulting in a clearer understanding of the threats faced by sex workers.
- Deeper connection with the needs of the communities they support.

**The linked impact of the above is that Tactical Tech has gained significant understanding of how best to support grassroots groups in evidence-based campaigning, which has in turn had an impact on our broader programme work.**

DMSC and WNU gained insight into how data about mistreatments can be transformed into visual outputs for advocacy. Tactical Tech tried to build processes to equip both organisations to take on further projects on visualisations of evidence and perhaps develop their own Atlas of Sex-Work packages in the future.

Violence against sex-workers and advocacy for their human rights is much less researched and supported. Data and evidence about sex worker communities are often collected by outsiders and the ownership of the data is rarely with sex workers themselves. As a result of doing the evidence collection themselves, **both organisations have a clearer picture of who perpetrates violence and also connecting the violence directly to policy** (particularly in the case of WNU doing advocacy around the abuse of the Anti-Trafficking law)

DMSC and WNU both now understand the importance of collecting their own evidence and being able to present it in a variety of ways depending upon advocacy goals and target audiences. This has seen a significant shift from reactive advocacy strategies to proactive ones. As a WNU secretariat member put it:

*“I did advocacy. We collected data, mobilized to document, record voices and photographed women. We [do this] to prepare a document to present to the government against the trafficking law that was passed in 2010. Whenever we meet with government officials, we use it as an opportunity to talk and present the data. Before the government said we didn’t have evidence. We used prayer vigils to Buddha as our tactic. I think documentation is much more effective than prayer vigils. (See r e a c h’s Evaluation Report, Appendix 3)*

This has had the effect of both enabling WNU to have a **stronger connection to their own communities and building their own confidence in their ability to create an accurate picture of what is happening in their communities**. Two members of the WNU sex worker secretariat reported:

*“There is clearer information about where and what kind of violence is happening. Before we used to tell stories about sex workers’ experiences. By sharing data, we are now more confident. Earlier, other stakeholders would question and mock us.*

*Earlier when we talked, we felt powerless. Now we feel more confident and powerful with government, military police and NGOs, because we have evidence.*

(Both quotes from r e a c h’s evaluation report -see appendix 3)

**Both organizations have also developed key skills in analysing and understanding their own data.** DMSC has shown key changes in their own understandings of who is responsible for perpetrating violence against sex workers, and what districts are actually the most dangerous.

WNU now has a clearer understanding of how the Anti-trafficking law creates more violence but also how the acts of raid and rescue actually drive sex-workers deeper into poverty.

Tactical Tech has also gained greater insights into how grassroots groups approach gathering evidence and how to engage them in thinking analytically and critically about presenting the information in the form of graphics. Tactical Tech's approach of being adaptive rather than prescriptive has also been reinforced. **One of the key learnings for us occurred when we were able to return to DMSC with draft visualisations of their own data. This transformed their approach to the project.**

Earlier workshops that showed examples of evidence-based advocacy and information visualisations were received positively but in a somewhat lukewarm fashion. When DMSC was able to see their own data as infographics, it was as if the proverbial penny dropped, and they suddenly became very clear and aware of how the project could significantly improve their advocacy. In hindsight we should have created some visualisations early on with their data to show them what was possible and help them grasp the power of this kind of visual representation earlier.

Initially this was conceived of as a three year project, and we had envisioned much of the 'replicability' component of the project to be addressed during this time. We hope to explore forms of replicability by informing Tactical Tech's development of materials around evidence and visual advocacy geared to grassroots groups. We also hope to see what happens when other sex-worker advocacy groups are exposed to DMSC and WNU's visualisations.

Both organisations are now in positions of building on the foundations of using evidence strategically and formulating proactive strategies. A new project could be formulated to assess revised advocacy goals and the current status of documentation efforts to explore the possibility of supporting development of new visualisation projects that could contribute to a package like the Atlas of Sex Work concept. The contribution of digital documentation technologies could also be explored in a new phase.

It is possible that in the near future, DMSC and WNU could think about working with technologies in specific aspects of their work, which may or may not involve significant 're-wiring'. Most critical is to not bring in more white-elephant technology but to incorporate processes, systems and platforms that will enable, support and help process their information needs in a way that has a strong impact on the organisations' core objectives.



The WNU secretariat working with their self-reflective tool

## 10. Overall assessment

At the start of the project in 2009, we knew we had a strong set of tools, tactics, and strategies for how grassroots communities might use evidence and were keen to see how they might work with marginalised and resource-constrained communities like sex-workers in South and South East Asia.

This project has been a significant step in implementing and learning from ground-up evidence-based advocacy, resulting in notable progress in both organisations' advocacy approaches – moving from reactive to proactive advocacy through the strategic use of information.

This project has been an invaluable opportunity to engage in a long term basis with grassroots groups – working in challenging environments on complex political issues – who might well be wary of shorter-term interventions. This has resulted in deeper, more nuanced understanding of how these types of organisations might be supported in the future.

Whilst this was initially a technology project, the initial assessment that was made of the partners' lack of readiness to use digital documentation techniques lead to a shift in project focus to advocacy readiness. As a result the project avoided technological interventions that would not have addressed more foundational, core issues that the two organisations had with working with information.

Instead we focused on advocacy goals and making more effective use of information and basic information-processing technologies. This led to greater and more immediate impact for WNU and DMSC.

Greater detail on the process of reacting to the assessments can be found in the project's Interim Report.

The evaluation work of the researchers showed how Tactical Tech's intervention had a positive impact on the partner organisations' advocacy. Our past work with grassroots groups has not had the benefit of this degree of detailed analysis about the behavioural change within the organisations, particularly in regards to their approach to advocacy. Having an objective eye capture how these groups have gone from reactive to proactive has been very exciting. What has been invaluable for Tactical Tech is learning how to get grassroots groups to think strategically about evidence.

The evaluation findings also helped us better understand some of the key challenges in implementing the project with DMSC – largely due to an internal opaque hierarchical institutional structure that WNU did not share. Tactical Tech will look quite differently at these kinds of partnerships in the future. In the past we might have written these kinds of partnerships off completely, but as a result of the evaluation, we now have a better understanding of where these relationships can go wrong and how to set expectations and working guidelines more effectively. Tactical Tech will now utilise these learnings as a set of case studies about the project which it will publish in the coming 12 months. This project has also informed, and will be included in, Tactical Tech's forthcoming Data and Design Guide.

## 11. Recommendations

The key recommendations from this project are as follows:

- Any technology project should begin with a proper **assessment relating to the use and application of technologies to the organisation's goals**. Criticisms of ICT4D (ICTs for Development) projects indicate that they tend to introduce technologies as solutions without effectively assessing what they will imply for the workings of beneficiaries and if technology, understood in the narrow sense of devices and platforms, is in fact an effective solution. The current state of an organisation's overall use of information needs to be assessed more broadly. One of the most challenging issues related to using technologies is information and knowledge management; the more devices and platforms are used to aggregate, process and communicate information, the greater the pressure to process the information that the use of these technologies generate. (Not to mention the pressure on organisations to actually integrate new technologies). Many **organisations want to use social media or databases without really thinking about their overall management of knowledge and information and how it can be used**. Poor information management in the analog world tend to be replicated in the digital world, except that in the digital context the sheer volume of information produced and accessed is exponentially greater. As a result, management becomes deeply problematic, and particularly for community-based grassroots groups.
- **Continue to design implementation projects that integrate self-reflection tools**. Active, participatory reflection on process can be very useful if it is integrated with the project activities and simultaneously develops strong monitoring & evaluation methodologies and feedback loops. One approach to the research component of this project would have been to have given the Project Lead and Project Coordinator a multi-day training in participatory action research at the beginning of the project. As the external research team had a hard time both comprehending the nature of the project and keeping up with its evolution, it would have been more efficient and cost effective if Tactical Tech had done the research element themselves with on-going support from an external consultancy.
- When supporting advocacy organisations working in marginalised communities, **support and allow for adaptive and substantial changes** during the course of the project.
- **Support grassroots communities to leverage social and web 2.0 media technologies to convey their messages**. Digitally-enabled activism has become a strong factor in global politics but many smaller groups are being left out primarily due to infrastructural limitations (from poor bandwidth to lack of multi-language platforms). Basic digital advocacy trainings can be useful for grassroots communities in leveraging their information more effectively. Collaborations between better resourced groups and those just starting out could take the form of direct capacity building. The groups were not ready for this type of training during the project, but thanks to this intervention, especially WMU would now greatly benefit from it, were this project to go into a next phase.
- There needs to be **greater connection between open-data movements and grassroots advocates** to ensure accessibility and usability of data released by public institutions. The kinds of knowledge created by grassroots groups also needs to find greater connection with the kinds of knowledge developed by more well-resourced and powerful groups such as research institutes. Scores of NGOs, research groups and governments conduct research with and amongst marginalised communities but such information tends to be used very specifically and is often not shared. Restrictions on academic research interventions, such as confidentiality issues, tend to close data off from wider use and scrutiny. And even if these reports are released publicly, access to the data for sharing on a common platform is difficult, as specific skills are required to build databases scraped from diverse sources. Essentially, **an open-data approach to community owned and community based data could be extremely beneficial to advocates**.

# Appendix 1



# Who Victimises Sex Workers?



## Police

The most visible representatives of the State in a sex-worker's life are members of the Police. The Police have sweeping powers to enforce the law against solicitation and organised prostitution.



## Local Hooligan

Young boys and men belonging to local social and religious groups who become powerful in their areas, start new gangs or become part of existing gangs, to threaten, extort and control other members of their society.



## Madams

A madam manages a group of sex-workers, schedules their work hours, clients. Madams are often involved in the buying of 'new girls' for sex work. In many situations, house-owners are also madams and vice-versa. Sometimes madams graduate to becoming house-owners. Many sex-workers become madams as they grow older and leave the "line"



**Beating:** 'Beating' is a word that is used to refer to minor and major assault, and domestic violence. Women interviewed for this project used the word 'beating' to refer to the following acts: kicking, slapping, beating, punching, being beaten with household objects, having spectacles and personal items broken, having objects poked into the eyes, being thrown against a wall. Many – but not all – women report that their Babus are more abusive under the influence of alcohol.

**19635**  
cases (16%)

## How Sex-workers are victimised.



**Verbal Abuse:** Many Indian languages have violent, derogatory and degrading words to refer to sex-workers. These words are considered abusive and insulting when directed at women who are not sex-workers: to be called a sex worker is considered a terrible insult to a 'good' woman's honour. Many sex-workers hide their work from their children in order to shield them from social discrimination, so a common form of mistreatment

sex-workers face is the threat of being outed to their children. According to the women interviewed for this project, verbal abuse is considered violence because of the public humiliation it embodies.

**40866**  
cases (33%)



**Threatening:** Sex-workers interviewed in parts of West Bengal report that they are threatened by local gangs, hooligans, goondas, madams, pimps, Police, house-owners, and even their own families. They are threatened with eviction, physical violence, abusive language, the threat of being outed to family and children, the threat of police arrests. Perpetrators of violent threats usually demand money or unpaid sex in exchange for not going ahead with their threats. In some cases perpetrators threaten sex-workers simply because they can; it is a display of power and aggression.

**8026**  
cases (7%)



**Police Arrests and Raids:** Sex-work in India is legal but solicitation for sex work is not, neither is organized prostitution – pimping, prostitution rings and running a brothel. Sex-workers are often arrested by the police for 'solicitation' and in raids on brothel areas. Sex-workers often have to pay money, or in unpaid sex, to get released. Violence, harassment and humiliation are also common during raids and arrests.

**30198**  
cases (25%)



**Extortion:** Sex-workers' work is valuable. Sex-workers' earnings support families, children and Babus. But it also gets taken away through extortion. The urban poor in India, which includes sex-workers, are expected to pay protection money to policemen, local goondas and hooligans. Madams, house-owners and pimps keep sex-workers in a state of indentured labour saying that their sex-work is being used to pay off the debts incurred in buying them.

While there are precise cuts that madams and pimps get from a sex-worker's earnings, and house-owners are paid a fixed rent, all of them use threats of violence to extort more money from sex-workers.

**23321**  
cases (19%)



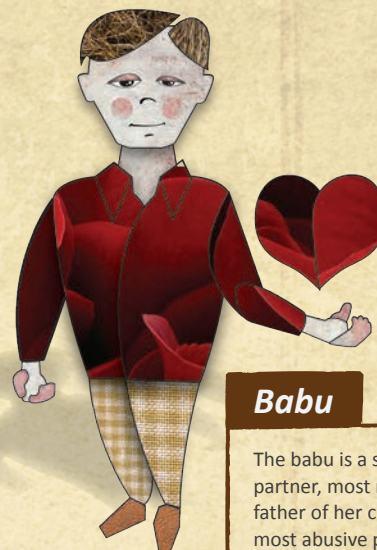
## Customer

Anyone who buys sex from a sex-worker. Customers may be one-off or regular.



## House-owner

A house-owner rents out accommodation and work-spaces to sex-workers.



## Babu

The babu is a sex-worker's most intimate partner, most regular customer, often the father of her children, and sometimes the most abusive person in her life. Some Babus have another home and family.

## Pimp

A pimp solicits clients for sex-workers.





Sex-workers in West Bengal face staggering levels of physical violence and psychological manipulation and abuse from the people closest to them, the people they work with and representatives of the State – the Police - who are responsible for protecting citizens. Victimisation is an everyday occurrence in the life of a sex-worker: beating, rape, harassment, violent raids and arrests, extortion, verbal abuse and so on.

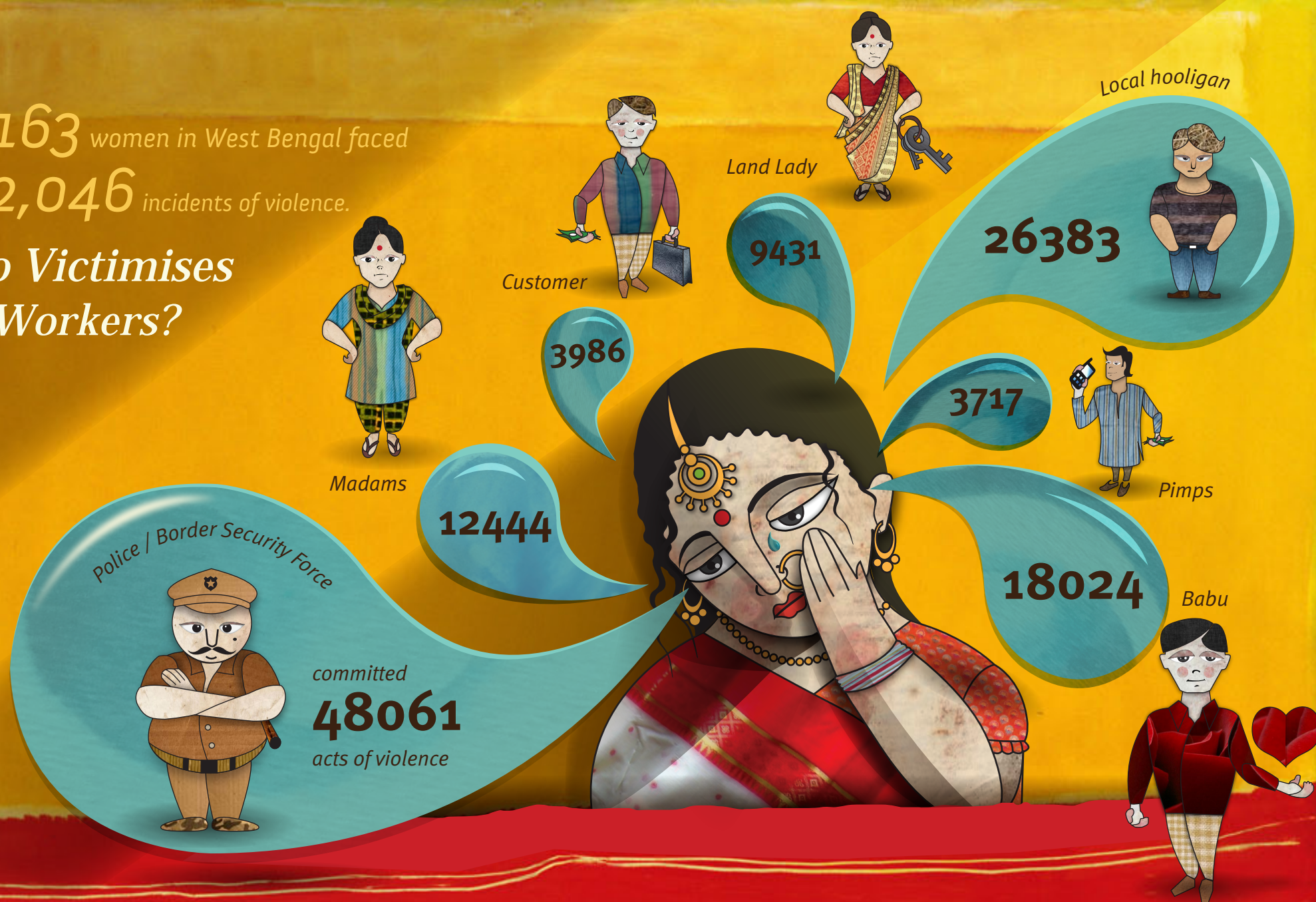
However, there are some kinds of victimisation that defy neat classification. Where would you put the following: “not being allowed to wear salwar kameez because the neighbourhood is worried that their daughters will be indistinguishable from sex-workers”, “being denied burial grounds”, “children not allowed to go to the local school” and “threatened to have head shaved”? Sex-workers report that these acts serve to belittle and humiliate them and their families.

Sex-workers are stigmatised and experience victimisation because they are considered 'immoral' 'bad women' and therefore beyond human dignity or respect. Discrimination and social marginalisation are the tangible effects of stigma. Stigma associated with sex-work is woven into the fabric of our cultural ideas about women, about family honour, notions of shame and in the structures of our everyday speech and language.

This work was carried out with the aid of a grant from the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada.

22,163 women in West Bengal faced  
1,22,046 incidents of violence.

## Who Victimises Sex Workers?



'Who Victimizes Sex Workers' was a collaborative project between Tactical Technology Collective and Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC) in West Bengal in India, to explore the use of community-owned and community-aggregated data as visualisations in advocacy campaigns. Tactical Tech and DMSC supported sex-workers in West Bengal to collect data on mistreatment from the community and represent it in various visual

formats for use in advocacy campaigns with their target audiences. Data was collected in 44 locations across Bengal from January to October 2010 using a structured questionnaire administered by members of DMSC. All questionnaires were sent to the central DMSC office in Calcutta where they were entered into a database and analysed.

A total of 22163 incidents of violence were recorded from a sample of 122046 sex-workers. The data was visualised by Mediashala, a design company working out of the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, India, based on feedback and guidance from DMSC and Tactical Tech

5730 cases  
Police Harassments

23321 cases  
Money Extortion

2542 cases  
Violent Arrests

21926 cases  
Violent Police Raids

8026 cases  
Threatening

40866 cases  
Verbal abuse

19635 cases  
Beating

How are  
Sex Workers  
Victimised

?



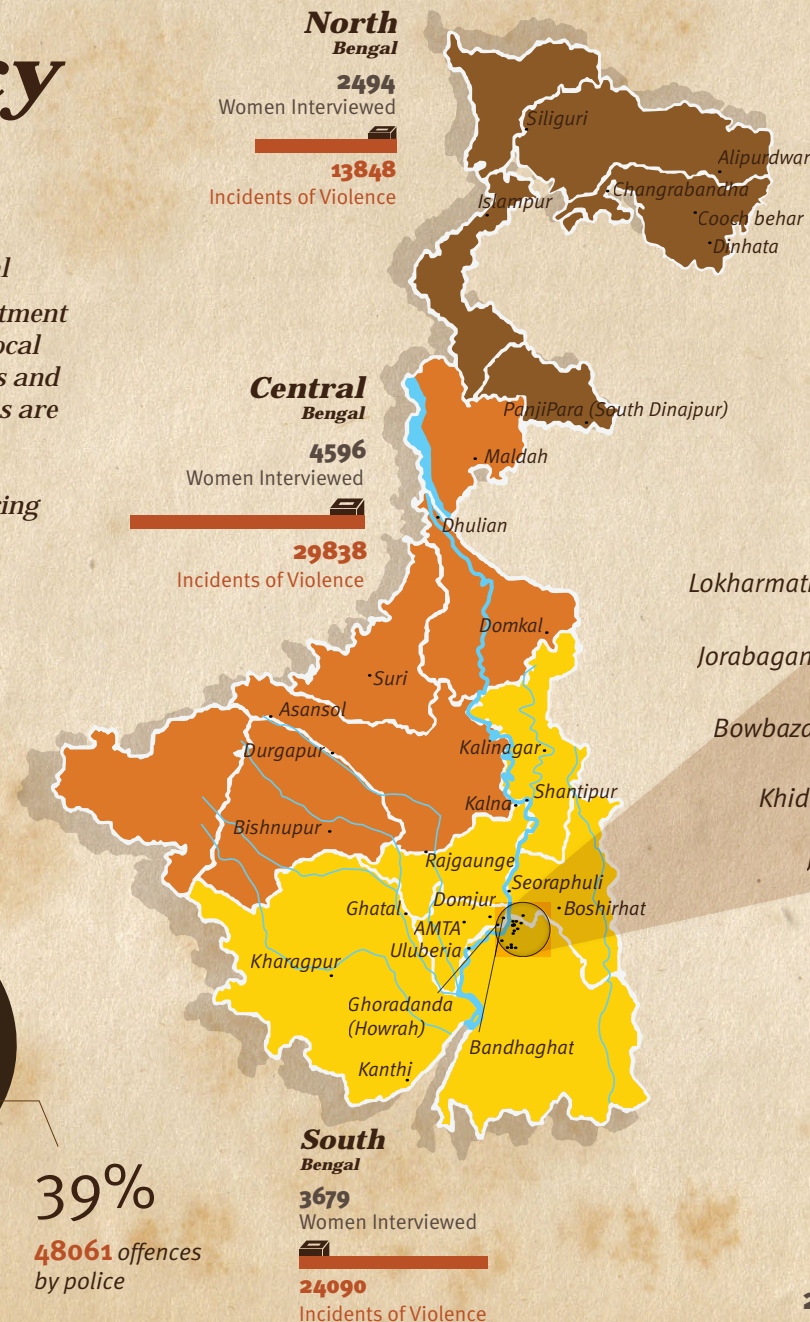
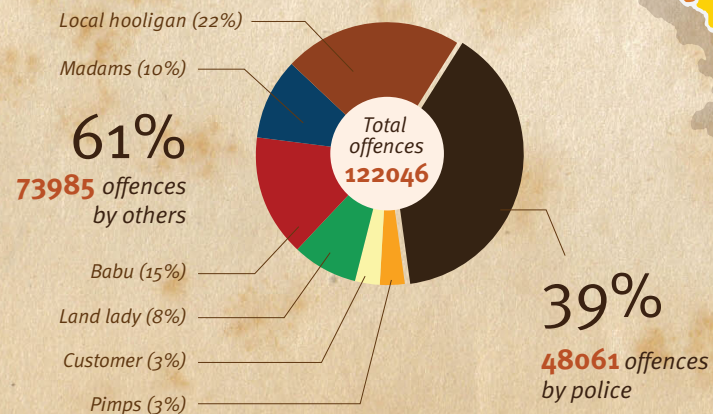
# Is your Constituency Suffering?

**22163** sex-workers across West Bengal reported **122046** incidents of mistreatment and violence from babus, Police, pimps, local gangs, hooligans, house-owners, madams and customers. Hooligans, gangs and goondas are often backed by political leaders.

Are the people of your constituency suffering silently? What could you do for them?

## Who Victimises Sex-workers ?

Police is responsible for nearly half of all abuses faced by sex-worker population in the constituency.



What can you do to make the lives of sex-workers in your area free from violence?

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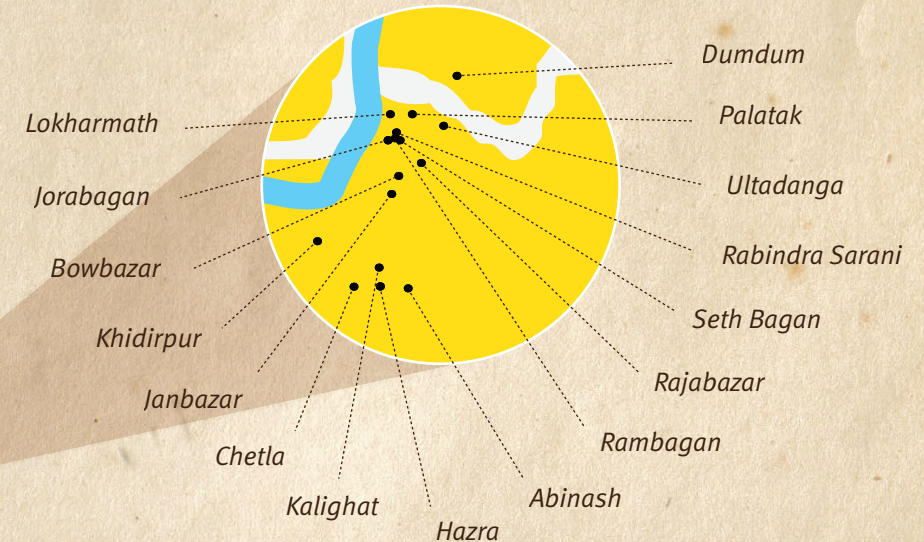
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## Calcutta Districts



**11394 /** Women Interviewed

**54270 /** Incidents of Violence



**Total Bengal**



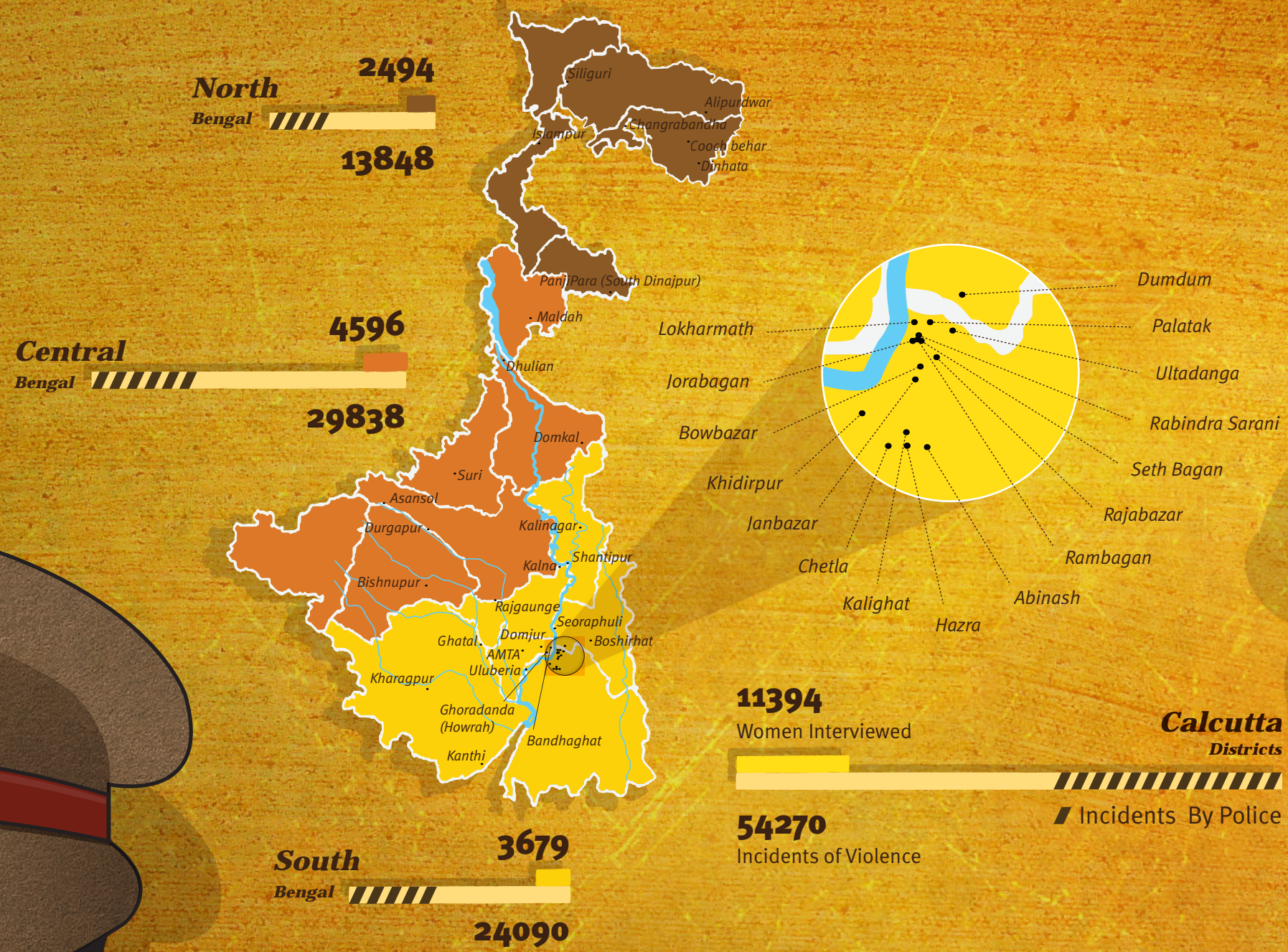
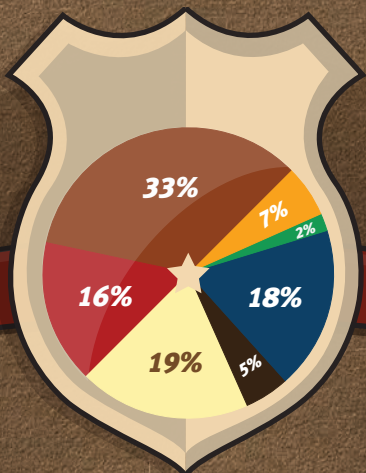
**22163 /** Women Interviewed

**122046 /** Incidents of Violence

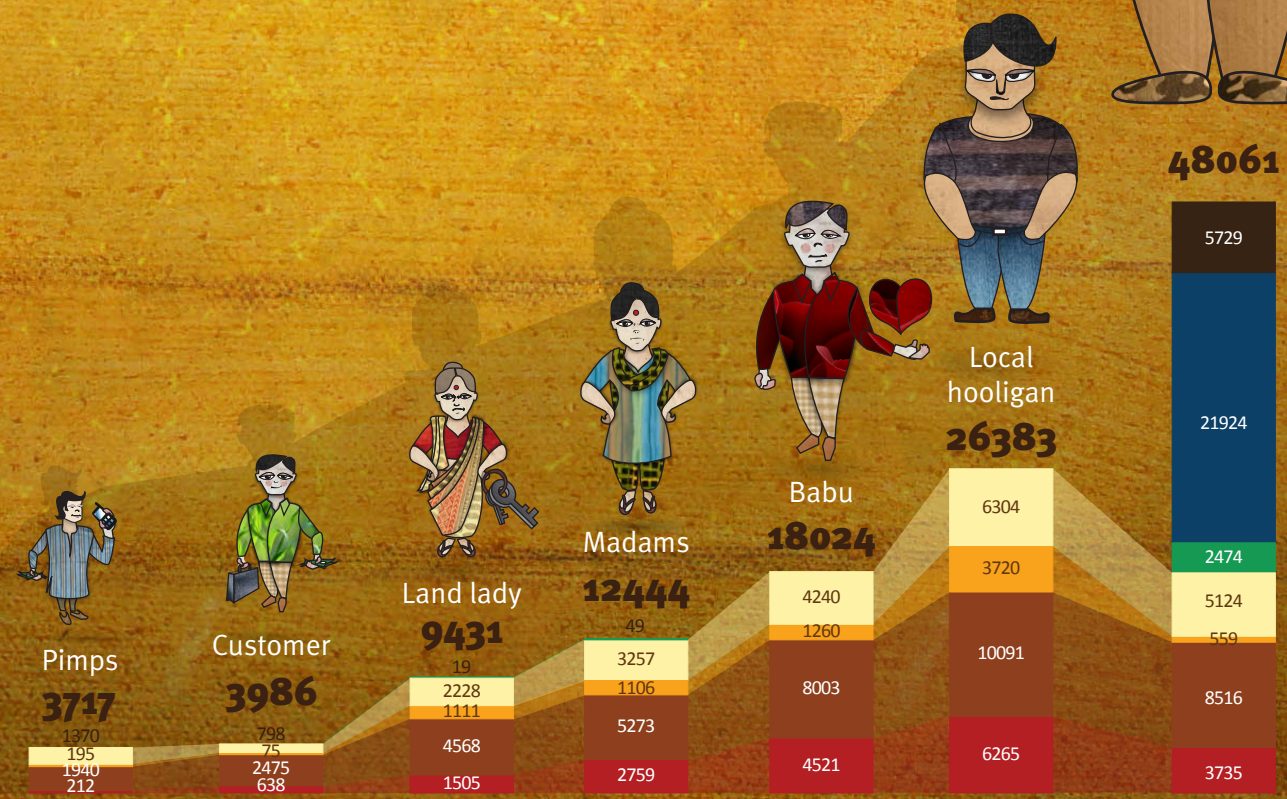
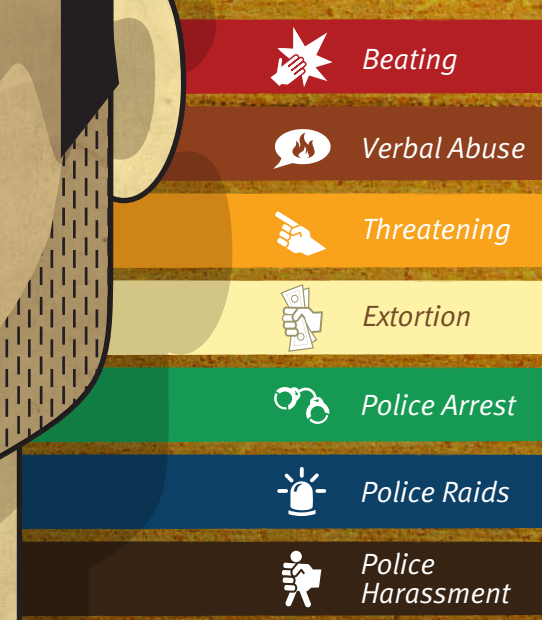


# Protectors or Exploiters?

22163 sex-workers across west Bengal reported 122046 incidents of mistreatment and violence from their babus, the police, pimps, house owners, madams and customers. The rates of violence by the police are higher because of their sweeping powers across different conditions and contexts: during raids, and because they can detain and harass sex workers on the street, anywhere in the city and in station houses and in jail. Sex workers report that arrests and raids are usually abusive and violent. Who are the police protecting?



Police and Border Security Force are responsible for nearly 40% of incidents of violence sex-workers face.



Number of acts of violence by



# Do you know what is happening in your own house?

**22163** sex-workers across West Bengal reported **122046** incidents of mistreatment and violence from babus, Police, pimps, local gangs, hooligans, house-owners, madams and customers. Hooligans, gangs and goondas are often backed by political leaders.

Are the people of your constituency suffering silently? What could you do for them?

Who Victimises Sex Workers:  
As a community, the police is responsible for most of the abuses the sex worker population faces



Police  
**48061**



Local hooligan  
**26383**



Babu  
**18024**



Madams  
**12444**



Land lady  
**9431**

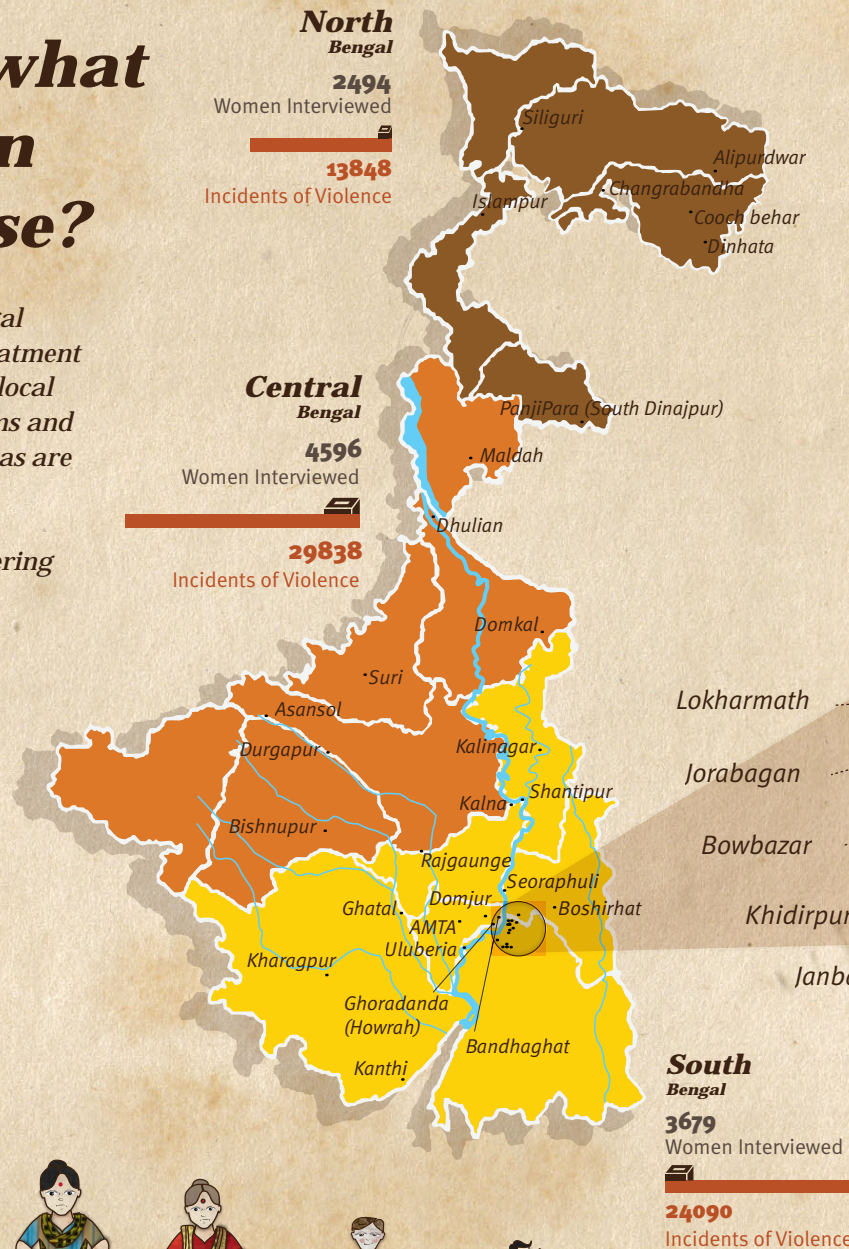


Customer  
**3986**



Pimp  
**3717**

Number of acts of violence by



What can you do to make the lives of sex-workers in your area free from violence?

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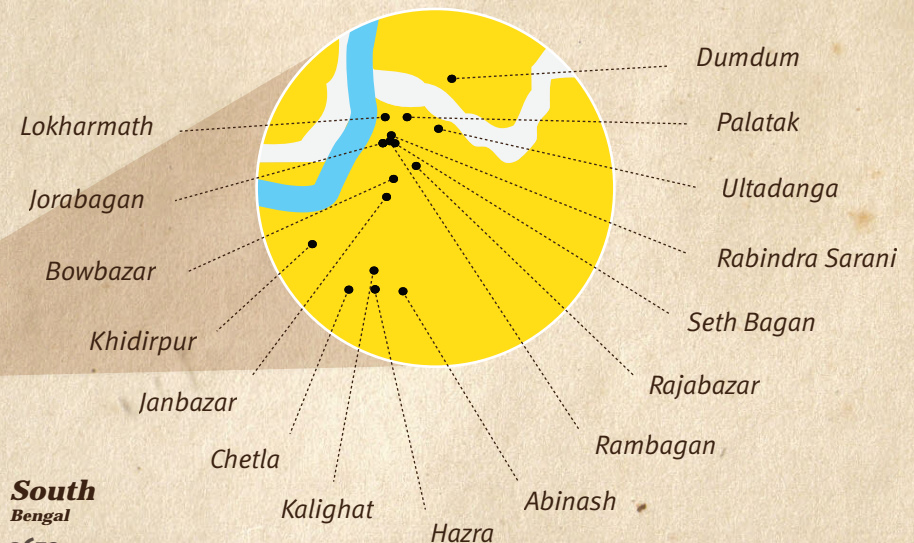
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## Calcutta Districts



11394 / Women Interviewed

54270 / Incidents of Violence



**Total Bengal**



22163 / Women Interviewed

122046 / Incidents of Violence



# Appendix 2



ទិន្នន័យបង្ហាញអំពីការរំលោភបំពានលើអ្នកប្រកបរបរផ្លូវភេទ  
ចំនួនប្រាំបីបន្ទប់ សំរាប់ខែ កក្កដា ឆ្នាំ ២០១១ ក្នុងរាជធានីភ្នំពេញ

ទិន្នន័យបង្ហាញអំពីការរំលោភបំពានលើអ្នកប្រកបរបរផ្លូវភេទ  
ចំនួន បីខេត្ត សំរាប់ខែ ធ្នូ ឆ្នាំ ២០១១ ក្នុងប្រទេសកម្ពុជា

រំលោភផ្លូវ  
ភេទ ៩ ករណី

ចុះចាប់  
(ក្រោមកម្មវិធី  
ប្រមូលជួយសង្គ្រោះ)  
១០៥ ករណី



ចាប់ដោយប្រាប់ពី  
បទល្មើសខូចសណ្តាប់  
ធ្លាប់សាធារណៈ  
៥៣ ករណី

ដាច់ថ្នាំពន្យារជីវិត  
៣៥ ករណី



យកស្រោមអនាម័យ  
ធ្វើជាភស្តុតាងដើម្បី  
ចាប់ស្ត្រីម៉ាស្សា  
១១ ករណី



ខ្ញុំប្រកបរបរផ្លូវភេទដើម្បី  
ជីវភាពគ្រួសារ

ជេរប្រមាថ  
គំរាមគំហែង  
១២៧ ករណី

ដកហូតយក  
ទ្រព្យសម្បត្តិ  
៣១ ករណី

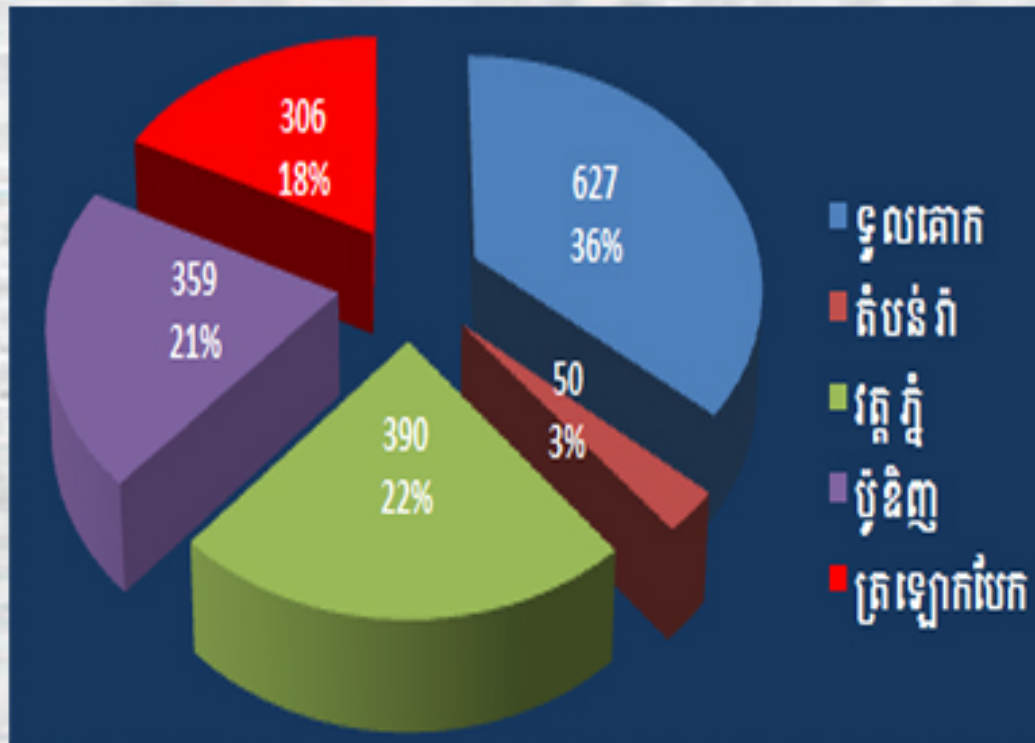
បង្ខំអាហារ  
៧២ ករណី



រំលោភលើ  
រាងកាយ  
៣៤ ករណី



ចាប់ឃុំលើសពី  
រយៈពេល ២៤ ម៉ោង  
១៦៧ ករណី



| ប្រភេទនៃបទរំលោភ                         | សៀមរាប | កំពត | ប.មានជ័យ | ចំនួនសរុបនៃបទរំលោភទាំង ៣ ខេត្ត |
|---|--------|------|----------|--------------------------------|
| រំលោភផ្លូវភេទ                           | ១      | ១    | ១        | ៣                              |
| ជេរប្រមាថគំរាមគំហែង                     | ១០     | ៣    | ៧        | ២០                             |
| រំលោភលើរាងកាយ                           | ៨      | ៥    | ៩        | ២២                             |
| អំពើហិង្សាប្លន់ប្លន់ផ្ទៃក្នុង           | ១២     | ៨    | ១១       | ៣១                             |
| ចុះចាប់(ក្រោមកម្មវិធីប្រមូលជួយសង្គ្រោះ) | ៥      | ២    | ៤        | ១១                             |
| ចាប់ឃុំខ្លួនលើសពីរយៈពេល ២៤ម៉ោង          | ៧      | ២    | ៤        | ១៣                             |
| ចាប់ដោយហេតុខូចសណ្តាប់ធ្លាប់សាធារណៈ      | ៧      | ១    | ៤        | ១២                             |
| ដាច់ថ្នាំពន្យារជីវិត                    | ៣      | ១    | ២        | ៦                              |



## Statistics on Violation to Sex Workers in 5 areas for Junly 2011 of Phnom Penh City

## Statistics on Violation to Sex Workers in 3 provinces for December 2011 in Cambodia

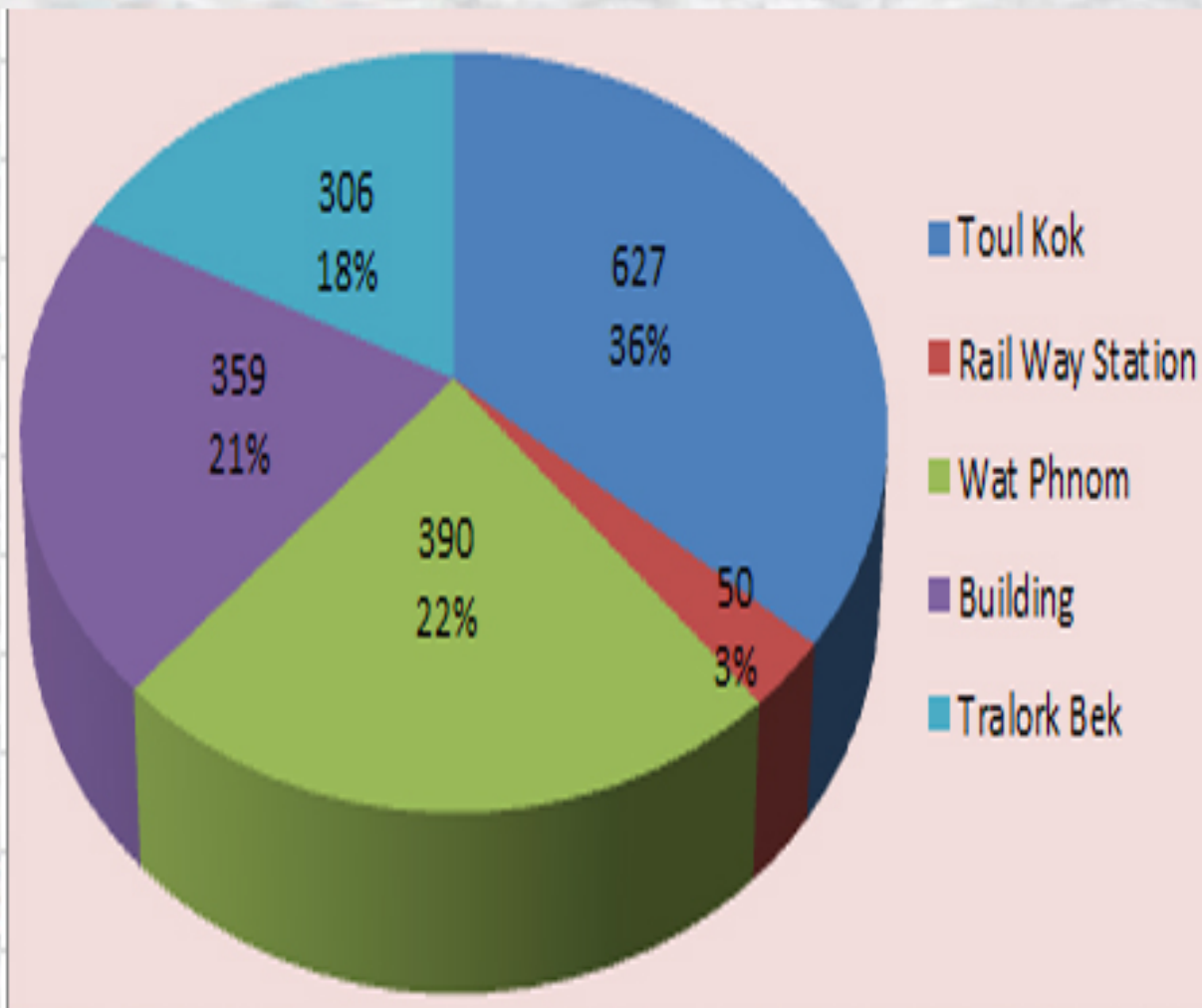
Sexual  
assaulted  
**9** Cases

Cursed  
and  
Threaten  
**127** Cases

Extorted  
properties  
**31** Cases

No Food  
**2** Cases

Public Disorder  
accusation **53** Cases

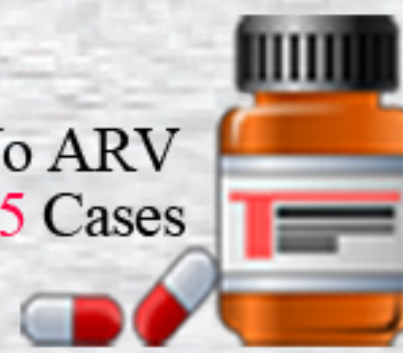


Arrests  
**105** Cases



Physical  
Violence  
**34** Cases

No ARV  
**35** Cases



Use Condom  
as evidence  
to accuse sex  
work at massage  
porlor **11** Cases



| Type of Violation                | Siem Reap | Kompot | Banteay meanchey | Total Cases |
|----------------------------------|-----------|--------|------------------|-------------|
| Sexual assaulted                 | 1         | 1      | 1                | 3           |
| Cursed and Threaten              | 10        | 3      | 7                | 20          |
| Physical Violence                | 8         | 5      | 9                | 22          |
| Violence from Polices/ gangsters | 12        | 8      | 11               | 31          |
| Arrests                          | 5         | 2      | 4                | 11          |
| Detained more then 24 h          | 7         | 2      | 4                | 13          |
| Public Disorder Accusation       | 7         | 1      | 4                | 12          |
| No ARV                           | 3         | 1      | 2                | 6           |



Detained more then  
24 h **167** Cases



I do sex work to  
support my  
family



# Appendix 3



Action  
research  
project on  
enabling sex  
worker  
communities  
to document  
violence  
against them  
in India and  
Cambodia

June 29

2012

---

*Somehow we do the same advocacy. But now we are more confident when we talk since we have the data with us, it strengthens anything we say. Before we would tell police the story and wait to take action. Now we show the data and can move quicker.' WNU Secretariat Member*

Evaluation

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## Abstract

IDRC funded Using Technology to Document Violations: Enabling Sex Worker Communities to Document Violence Against Them in India and Asia in 2010 to build advocacy capacity of sex worker groups through digital technologies. Tactical Technology Collective supported two sex worker rights groups in Asia-- Women's Network for Unity (WNU) and Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC) in evidence-gathering techniques and visualization development on key issues. Action research methods, which emphasized ongoing reflection by participants, were utilized to support the organizational shifts that took place in project implementation.

The observed achievements were evident across both intervention sites. DMSC and WNU made conceptual and attitude shifts towards proactive and evidence based advocacy. WNU and DMSC cultivated trust with sex worker communities during the survey exercises and conveyed their relevance as advocates for sex workers. Both organisations improved their research and documentation skills with seeing a study through from conceptualization, design, implementation, analysis to development of visuals for dissemination.

In terms of evaluation and reflection, the teams felt they made substantial progress since they were not aware of evaluation practices. However, the distance, financial complexities, numerous partners and other competing priorities posed a challenge for facilitation of self-assessment tool used for PAR. r e a c h observed that the lack of communication systems across partners made it difficult for them to support learning and the need for coordination around the action research cycles. A more rigorous engagement with a reflective practice approach including PAR capacity building sessions, early in the project life cycle, involvement of permanent staff, and dissemination of baseline findings would have led to greater engagement of all partners in PAR.

Challenges in collecting survey data, lack of senior level guidance support and inconsistent management represent key challenges in this project. The project partners worked in isolation in parallel fashion due to lack of ongoing communication across partners and lack of documentation in the form of reports, monitoring outputs and phone or person-to-person meetings. This led to a duplication of work, lack of partner alignment and learning opportunities.

This was Tactical Tech's first effort on engaging grassroots groups on using evidence in their advocacy.. They felt that being flexible and 'thinking on your feet' helped them be most relevant at any given time. The focus of Tactical Tech's work has been tools-development and capacities to generate evidence and develop visualizations for advocacy tactical purposes, WNU and DMSC required skills in conceptualizing, developing and implementing advocacy strategies.

Indeed, sex worker movements, across world, are struggling with a range of structural barriers characterized by anti-trafficking lobbies' effective threats in changing laws, less donor support, less institutional support from weakening UN agencies, increasingly indifferent government agencies and deteriorating partnerships with other community based agencies. This has led to a context in which organizations such as WNU and DMSC have become increasingly isolated placing them into increasingly vulnerable terrain. WNU and DMSC expressed challenges related to how they should proceed with visualizations effectively, to reach government audiences and police respectively. Consistent with these reports, Tactical Tech also identified a need to focus

resources on building advocacy skills. While it may not have been in Tactical Tech's mandate to address these concerns, more needs to be done in the design of future projects to ensure that organizations can be successful in using the outputs produced through Tactical Tech's efforts. More deliberate and adaptive management and communication approaches and mechanisms may have helped Tactical Tech partnerships remain in closer alignment during the project. In doing so, the evaluation team could have played a more functional role in cross-learning activities and in developing evaluative thinking and capacity among partners.

DMSC and WNU have identified ways to utilize lessons learned from the evaluation including action plans related to the sex workers forthcoming freedom festival and organization-wide self assessment framework respectively. WNU and DMSC have adapted Tactical Tech interventions in their other projects. WNU have begun to use documentation and visualization as part of the Center for Legal Services (CLS) project and DMSC with "children of sex work project" and "Self Regulatory Board" projects.

Both DMSC and WNU expressed the need for more time and funding to see the advocacy initiatives which were begun to completion.

## **I. Background**

The *Action research project on Using Technology to Document Violations: Enabling Sex Worker Communities to Document Violence Against Them in India and Cambodia* began in 2010 with support from IDRC to build capacity of sex worker groups to strengthen advocacy through digital technologies. Specifically, Tactical Technology Collective partnered with two prominent sex worker rights groups in Asia-- Women's Network for Unity (WNU) from Cambodia and Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC) from West Bengal, India. Over two years, "Using Technology to Document Violations: Enabling Sex Worker Communities to Document Violence Against Them in India and Cambodia" aimed to explore how digital documentation technologies might assist sex worker groups in documenting violations and communicating this evidence internally and to policy makers. Their aim was to strengthen their advocacy work by raising awareness about the scale and the nature of the problems sex workers face, in order to influence policy and practice.

As such, Tactical Tech supported DMSC and WNU to innovate efforts to collect, organize and present data, using a variety of digital tools and techniques to carry out effective advocacy interventions. The original aim was to explore how digital documentation technologies assists sex worker groups in documenting violations, and how these groups investigate and communicate evidence to policy makers. As the project evolved, the aim focused on producing visual representations of evidence that the organisations had collected, for use in their ongoing advocacy efforts. Examples of various visualisation projects included:

- Representing evidence to tell a story, showing the scale and multi-dimensional nature of mistreatment;
- Mapping commercial developments in brothel areas to show impact on sex workers efforts to improve its image;
- Exploring the differences between sex workers and their families and their wider communities;

- Mapping impact of sex work economies to demonstrate support to local entrepreneurs, industries and local economies; and,
- Providing close surveillance of law enforcement officers through discrete data collection methods.

By implementing these projects, DMSC and WNU staff would learn what works and improve their interventions along the way. It was envisaged that action research methods, which emphasize ongoing reflection by participants, would be utilized to support the organizational shifts that would take place.

## **II. Evaluation goal and objectives**

The evaluation goal is to explore shifts in the way DMSC and WNU conduct advocacy work using digital technology and documentation in a sustainable manner. These questions were explored in light of the theory of change described in section 2 of the Evaluation Findings.

Specific objectives include:

- 3.1 To explore changes in ways DMSC/WNU use information to influence policies.
- 3.2 To understand how evidence gathering, collation and analysis at DMSC/WNU has changed;
- 3.3 To understand how organizational change occurs and appears as a result of the changes in the way DMSC/WNU operates;
- 3.4 To explore changes in participatory action research and reflection skills.

## **III. Key research questions**

This project explored whether digital documentation technologies can assist in building rigour into documentation of violations to be used for advocacy purposes. The central question was: “Whether and how digital documentation techniques can improve documentation and reporting of violations against sex workers as well as internal communication and advocacy by members of the sex workers’ organisations WNU and DMSC?”

Some of the key questions guiding data collection efforts for this part of the study include the following:

1. Information Use
  - a. How does DMSC/WNU use information for advocacy? How is it different from how they operated two years ago, before the Tactical Tech intervention?
  - b. What are some of the successes in the way they use information to influence policy? What are some of the challenges? Barriers?
  - c. What are effective ways of overcoming those barriers?
2. Organizational development
  - a. In what ways is DMSC/WNU operating today, particularly when conducting advocacy?
  - b. What ways are DMSC/WNU operating differently as organizations, particularly when conducting advocacy?
    - i. Probes: reflexivity, relationship building
  - c. What helped facilitate those changes?

- d. In what ways would DMSC/WNU like to operate differently but have been unable?
  - e. What are some of the ‘organizational change’ successes or breakthroughs?
  - f. What have been some challenges or barriers to organizational-change at DMSC/WNU?
3. Participatory Action Research (PAR)
- a. To what extent has DMSC/WNU used action research cycles (e.g. SA tool, other)?
    - i. Probes on: self-assessment exercises through tool or otherwise.
  - b. What has facilitated the use of action research skills (SA tool)?
  - c. What are some successes?
  - d. What have represented challenges or barriers?

## IV. Methodology

### Study population

The study populations included in this analysis comprised of the following groups:

1. DMSC and WNU staff involved in *Action research project on getting sex workers voices heard in Asia*.
2. Government and UNAIDS stakeholders in Cambodia
3. Community members in Cambodia

### Study population

The study populations included in this analysis comprise the following groups:

1. WNU/DMSC staff
2. Community members receiving support from WNU
3. WNU Stakeholders (e.g. UNAIDS, Government partners, etc.)
4. Tactical Tech staff (Dirk, Maya)

### Interview guide

The research team developed an interview guide for use across all interviews, which was vetted by Tactical Tech, WNU and DMSC.

Analysis Workshop Agendas (Appendix 1) outlines how participants were guided through processes in analyzing findings. Specifically, they used the project Self Analysis tools, advocacy implementation tools (for DMSC) and strategy self-assessment tool (for WNU) were developed accordingly (see Appendix 3). It consisted of PLA exercises and the self-assessment tool.

### Data Collection and analysis

A combination of data collection methods were used, including: in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, document review and workshop participation. The workshops consisted of participatory and self-assessment exercises. To ensure findings and lessons learned will be utilized, the evaluators led a 1-2 day exercise which integrated findings into their organizational

strategy, action plans and future projects (e.g. the Sex worker Freedom Festival scheduled in July 2012).

In addition to the participatory and self-analysis exercises, all transcribed interviews and field notes were coded and analyzed. Analysis of the data was conducted within the framework of answering the key research questions identified above in Section II.

## **V. Evaluation Findings**

Evaluation findings are analyzed and summarized across both intervention sites— West Bengal, India and Cambodia. Similarities and differences were observed in areas related to advocacy achievements, organizational change, action research and reflection practice and challenges that were faced. Ttc

### **1. Overview of intervention**

In this project, Tactical Tech aimed to build capacity among DMSC and WNU staff and supporters so that they acquire skills and tools to strengthen their advocacy efforts. They did this by supporting evidence-gathering techniques and visualization development on key issues affecting sex workers in Cambodia and West Bengal, India. As detailed in the timeline (Appendix 2), implementation support took place after the needs assessments and the Atlas of Sex Work concept was developed. Tactical Tech decided not to have a project-start up meeting as was originally envisaged. This was because DMSC and WNU started at different times and because Tactical Tech Collective felt it made more sense to focus on bespoke projects around the Atlas of Sex Work separately. Instead, they conducted trainings and remote coaching in data collection and visualization development during the first year. During the second year, Tactical Tech brought together data, messages and visual inspirations to graphic designers who developed professional graphics.

After the needs assessment exercises at DMSC, in the March, 2010 Tactical Tech developed an Atlas of Sex Work concept which helped consolidate their thinking. The Atlas of Sex Work concept was introduced to WNU after their needs assessment in August, 2010. Tactical Tech held workshops on evidence based advocacy for DMSC and on data collection for WNU. Initially four micro projects were planned for DMSC, which was later reduced to two micro projects. Early in the project cycle, DMSC collected data on violence against sex workers in 48 locations across West Bengal. The design firm Mediashala produced draft visuals based on 'perpetrators of sex worker violence' data. Five infographics were produced as small print posters. DMSC produced one (English) poster set entitled 'Who Victimizes Sex Workers'. The Bengali and Hindi versions of the visualizations are not yet finalized. Therefore, DMSC has not used the visualizations which aim to target government and community stakeholders.

WNU developed a survey to collect data from provinces both around and beyond Phnom Penh. With the assistance of Chor Chantyda from the Cambodia Centre for Human Rights WNU has prepared a poster which they have shared with a variety of stakeholders, including the National AIDS Authority, UNAIDS, and the Cambodian Social Welfare Department. WNU is now preparing “Rescue us from the Rescuers”, “Your Law Brings Us More Problems, Not Solutions” and “Not Being Rescued from Poverty” graphics showing how the implementation of the Anti-Trafficking Law (ATL) negatively impacts sex workers.

## **Participatory Action Research and Reach**

The project was anchored in a participatory action research framework which was led by the evaluation team.

On-going reflection was linked with action through practical action planning at the end of each session. The evaluation team adapted a knowledge management tool from the Constellation called the: 'Self Assessment'. In this approach, the evaluator from outside does not assess the community and advise it of its weaknesses and its strengths. Instead, this tool guides project implementers and stakeholders through a process of collective self-assessment. Based on strength-based methodologies, the tool works on the premise that nobody knows more about the project than the implementation team itself.

WNU, DMSC and Tactical Tech used the tool to reflect on their progress, challenges and opportunities. The Self-Assessment framework consists of a set of practices drawn from a collective dream generated by the teams. As a first step, each team member thought about their own personal dream for the project. In the final stage, the whole team came together to build a single vision that everyone came to own.

From this dream, the evaluation team extracted themes (or practices) that together would lead the team towards their dream. The tool was designed to use on a regular basis with the aim to generate discussion and reflection. For each practice the team rated themselves at a level between 1 and 5.

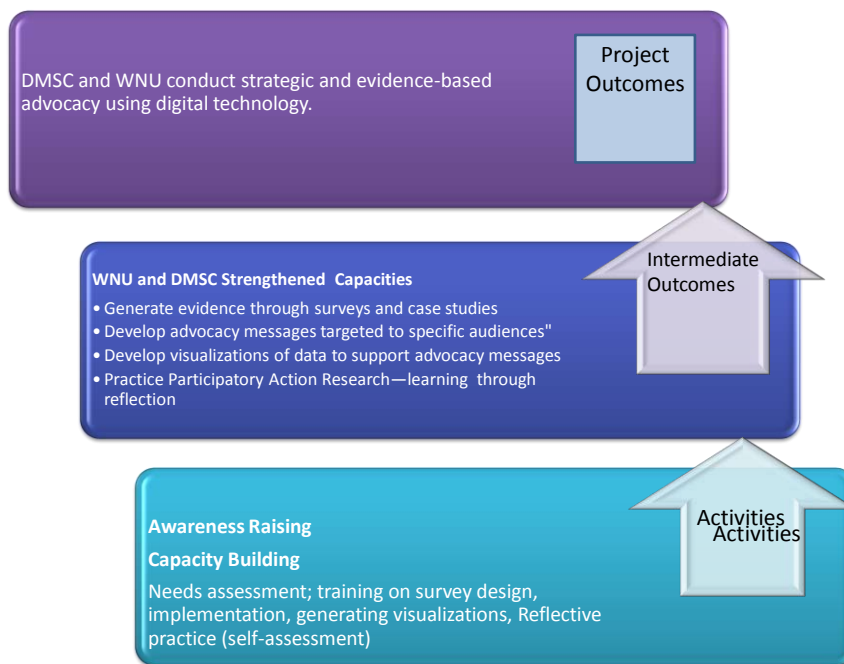
As the teams rated themselves, they discussed what they accomplished and their challenges after which they deliberated on what level they would like to achieve in the next few months. An action plan was compiled to reach the target they aimed to achieve.

## **2. Understanding the Theory of Change**

The theory of change, seen in the diagram below, is based on a capacity building and action research model. The theory of change reflects the notion that sufficient exposure to technical capacity skills building through training and support combined with reflection and learning will lead to changes in the way WNU and DMSC conduct advocacy. That is, instead of focusing on reactive advocacy, DMSC and WNU will engage strategically using evidence-based and documentation approaches to change policy.

The evaluation aims to explain the mechanisms for achieving the desired change in approaches to advocacy. The pathway to change – in this case via WNU and DMSC - includes building capacity, conducting action research and supporting the role of DMSC and WNU staff and stakeholders to achieve their collective goals





**Figure 1. Theory of change for effective digital technology and evidence use for sex worker advocacy.**

### 3. Project Achievements

The project achievements observed across both intervention sites is evident in three primary areas, including: the application of ‘pro-active’ advocacy approaches, improved community relationships, and research and documentation skills.

Perhaps the project’s biggest achievement is having built awareness on becoming more strategic in relation to advocacy among Tactical Tech’s two partners-- WNU and DMSC. Specifically, many evaluation respondents indicated that the intervention helped to strengthen understanding of **strategic and evidence-based approaches to advocacy**. According to the former project manager in DMSC’s Tactical Tech project,

*Previously we did ‘reactive advocacy.’ They showed us how to do proactive advocacy. This is my personal learning.*

DMSC respondents provided examples of reactive advocacy which had shifted. For example, DMSC led a protest against the Immoral Trafficking and Prevention Act (ITPA) in 2006 where hundreds of sex workers and allies marched at Jantar Mantar, Delhi’s frequent demonstration site. This was in protest against the proposed amendment (ITPA section 5c) which prosecutes clients of sex workers. The amendment was not passed but the problem has resurfaced in the form of a Supreme Court ruling which is now pending. DMSC staff expressed a keen interest to move away from reacting to laws, policies, and crisis. Instead they expressed interests to be more proactive in changing laws and policies through use of evidence to support a focused advocacy strategy.

Figure 2 DMSC staff proudly display drafts of the visualisations



Both DMSC and WNU now understand the importance of being strategic, systematic and having clarity around advocacy goals. For example, the social security act in unorganized sector does not include sex workers. DMSC has now accumulated the list of names of the National Advisory Council (NAC) and key members of parliament, which they will use to lobby. Over the past six months, DSMC has worked systematically to secure signatures from 17 members of parliament, in support of sex workers.

Similarly, in Cambodia, WNU has used data to advocate against the government's use of violence, to ensure sex workers have access to treatment and to turn down the law against trafficking. According to a WNU secretariat member,

*I did advocacy. We collected data, mobilized to document, record voices and photographed women. We [do this] to prepare a document to present to the government against the trafficking law that was passed in 2010. Whenever we meet with government officials, we use it as an opportunity to talk and present the data. Before the government said we didn't have evidence. We used prayer vigils to Buddha as our tactic. I think documentation is much more effective than prayer vigils.*

WNU went beyond collecting the data and developing visuals to actually use the data for advocacy purposes within communities, anti-trafficking lobbies and the government. The visuals were designed to communicate simple messages about violence with a range of stakeholders. As described in the intervention section, WNU organized a rally in which several community members convened outside the WNU office and presented the survey findings. This same group of sex worker activists protested against an anti-trafficking rally sponsored by MTV that same day. They also used the visuals in the form of mini posters with government stakeholders during regularly scheduled meetings. The WNU secretariat members described incidents in which these

posters were used as points of discussion with government officials. This was corroborated with government officials. According to the National AIDS Authority (NAA) Vice President, for example, the findings reflected those of NAA research findings. The evaluation team found the posters on the desks of stakeholders interviewed, including the vice president of the National Aids Authority, the MARP advisor for UNAIDS, and the Chief Officer at the Department of Social Welfare. When asked if they shared the information with others, the NAA Vice President indicated that he shared the WNU mini-poster with the chief of police department on anti-trafficking. This sharing of information among government stakeholders reveals the extent to which visuals are being used.

According to Tactical Tech, this welcomed achievement may largely be a result of Tactical Tech's flexible, responsive approach in the intervention. According to Tactical Tech staff, *We started every session by reviewing their advocacy goals and messages, we would then focus them on the audiences they were targeting and discuss the best approaches. We often had to think on our feet, but most importantly we were mostly in active listening mode.*

This was Tactical Tech's first effort on engaging grassroots groups on using evidence in their advocacy. They felt that being flexible and 'thinking on your feet' helped them be most relevant at any given time. For example, during their last WNU visit, they aimed to complete the design briefs for the visualisations. WNU had assembled an outreach team, of over 20 interviewers to conduct the survey. They began the workshop by reviewing the connections between the advocacy goals, the surveys and the aggregated data. They printed out the spreadsheets, which was around 40 pages of data and laid them out across the room so that the interviewers could see the data for themselves. Once a clear connection was made between the data and the advocacy goals, Tactical Tech broke them up into small groups. They then facilitated a brainstorm session on "kinds of visual representations" which would be appropriate for the advocacy work they intended. Eventually Tactical Tech prioritized the ideas for the visualizations with the project team and was able to come up with three design briefs, including: "Rescue us from the Rescuers", "Your Law Brings Us More Problems, Not Solutions" and "Not Being Rescued from Poverty"

### **3. Action research and reflection**

To support the participatory action and research (PAR) component of this project, WNU, DMSC and Tactical Tech/reach developed their own self-assessment tools, with the support of the evaluation team (see attached Appendix 3). The first and last self-assessments were facilitated by the evaluators. Team members facilitated the exercises on the other occasions, in their own institutions. As a result, there was inconsistency in reporting and data outputs.

An analysis of the self-assessment events revealed that staff in both WNU and DMSC critically analysed their work on two to three occasions since the project began. In each event, they used the self-assessment tool to guide them. In some cases they developed action points based on lessons learned. The evaluation team provided on-site support on the initial and last self-assessment exercises and tool development. On these occasions, the evaluation team observed staff and community members - at WNU and DMSC sites - engage in self-reflection and critical analysis which led to deeper understanding of their work. Both the DMSC and WNU teams felt the tool and self-assessment exercises were of great value. For example, WNU recognized their need to expand their advocacy approaches beyond a confrontational approach they formerly

relied on after conducting a reflection exercise. Specifically, WNU determined the need to shift approaches as a primary concern during their first self-assessment exercise, particularly in their discussions related to WNU's vision. During that session, WNU advisors and secretariat members determined a need to acquire relationship-building skills to engage in cooperative advocacy approaches, as this quote illustrates.

*Through the self-assessment tool we came to know where we stand. I liked it because we are assessing ourselves, not outsiders who are evaluating us.*  
WNU secretariat member

DMSC and WNU both increased their ratings – by two to three out of five points - over the course of a year in relation to **documentation and survey capacities**. According to them, regular data collection is taking place in DMSC and both organizations have capacities to conduct surveys with moderate support from external experts. As stated by a DMSC staff member,

*Progress is that we are at least collecting data at the districts which we hadn't done before.*

Figure 3 DMSC Self assessment Framework

| PRACTICES   | LEVEL - 1<br>১০ - ২ | LEVEL - 2<br>১১ - ২ | LEVEL - 3<br>১২ - ৬ | LEVEL - 4<br>১৩ - ৭ | LEVEL - 5<br>১৪ - ১০ |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| DOCUMENTATION METHODOLOGY<br>উপাত্তা সংগ্রহ (১০)<br>উপাত্তা বিশ্লেষণ (১০)   |                     |                     | Diagonal lines      | 35                  |                      |
| TAILORING INFORMATION OR DATA FOR SPECIFIC AUDIENCES<br>নির্দিষ্ট জনগোষ্ঠীর জন্য<br>উপাত্তা/উপাত্তা বিশ্লেষণ<br>করা, তথ্য |                     |                     | Diagonal lines      | 3                   |                      |
| DMSC HAS EVIDENCE BASED ADVOCACY<br>উপাত্তা/উপাত্তা বিশ্লেষণ<br>প্রমাণভিত্তিক   |                     | Diagonal lines      | 3-5                 |                     |                      |
| EVICTIION REGULATED IN SW SITES<br>সামাজিক ঐক্য<br>আন্দোলন (১০)   |                     |                     | Diagonal lines      | 35                  | Threats continue     |
| RESOURCE MOBILISATION<br>সম্পদ সংগ্রহ/সংগঠন   |                     | Diagonal lines      | 2                   |                     |                      |
| REFLECTIVE PRACTICE<br>অনুভবভিত্তিক প্রক্রিয়া  |                     | Diagonal lines      | 3                   |                     |                      |

In relation to **advocacy**, both WNU (in campaigns) and DMSC (eviction regulation) rated improvements, with up to two points. WNU used data in their campaigns and claimed that they have violence and arrests have reduced. Similarly, in DMSC one staff reported,

*while the [eviction] threats are still there, they have been able to stop and regulate eviction at sex worker sites.*

In the final self-assessment DMSC reduced their rating in evidence based advocacy. They did so recognizing that they had rated themselves too high, since they had not yet tested the visualizations. According to DMSC staff member,

*We don't have skills to tailor it for police. But we are using data collected for policy level advocacy, especially repeal of ITPA.*

Figure 4 Endline workshop at DMSC office



**Relationship-building** shifted only slightly. DMSC felt they needed to do collaborate with partners and other stakeholders more effectively. WNU respondents feel their relationship with others have improved, but have further to go. WNU rated themselves presently at 3.25 at the final review which they had increased from one. WNU staff regularly attend meetings called by different stakeholders. They realize that more needs to be done, particularly with such as government agencies who continue to object to the demand for recognizing sex work as work.

In terms of **evaluation and reflection**, the teams felt they made substantial progress since they were not aware of evaluation practices. They increased ratings of approximately three points over one year. The evaluation team helped DMSC and WNU apply the tool beyond the boundaries of the Tactical Tech project. WNU requested support in developing an organization-wide self-assessment framework. They also developed self-assessment tools for partner organizations. On one occasion, WNU facilitated the self-assessment exercise on their own, in which staff and secretariat members spent the entire day engaged in self-analysis. Both WNU and DMSC demonstrated confidence and commitment to integrate in organizational practice. As one of the lead figures in the WNU secretariat indicated,

*I will take this tool with me everywhere. It's very dear to us. We find it easier than before. And, useful to learn where we are now and where we can go. It is helpful because it teaches us to analyze ourselves and we don't need money to hire external evaluators.*

The evaluation team found that WNU has build its critical reflection capacity substantially as they now rated themselves lower, realising that they have not fully engaged in evaluative



thinking and learning. During the final self assessment they reflected on the tendency to rate themselves higher than they actually were. This sparked long and intense discussions on each practice which cultivated deeper understandings of the issues and motivated the team to make an action plan.

Figure 5 WNU member presenting the Self assessment framework at the endline workshop



The Tactical Tech and reach teams developed a common self-assessment framework in November 2011, during a face to face meeting. The evaluation team facilitated a subsequent session on skype in Jan and March 2012. They observed several changes in **transferring the intervention** in and beyond the Tactical Tech project, as they included their colleagues in the learning opportunities. The Tactical Tech team increased their rating to level three from level one in relation to the success with the DMSC and WNU **visualizations**, one being that DMSC have offered to use their own funds for translation of visualizations into Hindi and Bengali. In the area of **evaluative thinking**, Tactical Tech felt they moved from level two to level four, since they assumed responsibility for the self-assessment sessions to take place, during the second year of the project cycle. The Tactical Tech cited many examples of how the self-assessment sessions are particularly important for project partners, including:

*I felt doing self-assessment in DMSC really helped us answer the question “is it worthwhile?” I could only get at the changes when we did this [self-assessment] exercise. I now see the value in doing it because it is a way of documenting changes.*

### PAR challenges

While the evaluation team was available for off-site facilitation and support through skype, it was not possible to coordinate sessions. WNU and DMSC program teams led one or two exercises themselves without facilitative support. Unfortunately, the self-assessment events had not taken place as frequently as had been anticipated. While staff and stakeholders at both

DMSC and WNU acknowledged the usefulness of the self-assessment tool, there were many challenges.

For example, it may have been falsely used as a monitoring tool, rather than a self-assessment tool. The evaluation team observed this on one occasion, in which the implementing agency was questioned on deadlines, as it related to a timeline and ratings on the tool. The self-assessment tool was thereby transformed into a monitoring tool rather than a reflective tool. As a result, it created mistrust and disinterest in further pursuing self-assessment exercises. It lost its premise of being a self-directed assessment tool without external bias or pressure. Because no other monitoring mechanism was in place, the self-assessment tool became the default monitoring tool, at least on one occasion described here. This may have led, in part, to the lack of future self-assessment events until the final review. The lack of enthusiasm for the tool may have been avoided if a capacity building exercise was conducted early in the project cycle. Perhaps the evaluators made too many assumptions about common understandings of action research theories, and practice. Such an exercise may have helped to ensure collective understanding of the self-assessment tools' uses, benefits and potential misuses.

Distance and the need for virtual facilitation of self-assessment represents an ongoing challenge. Problems with internet connectivity, translation, and limited capacities in using Skype or G-talk was often cited as the reason connections could not be made. According to the Project Manager, she helped DMSC download Skype. Nonetheless, they were unable to use Skype when self-assessment sessions were planned.

Limited funding for PAR also hampered the regular self-assessment exercises from taking place. In the case of DMSC the action planning could not be done in January 2011 due to management issues. The evaluation team attempted to help them develop an action plan through Skype on three occasions, but it was not possible.

Tactical Tech saw the value of using the tool with implementing partners, but was less convinced in its utility for themselves. The project manager indicated that Tactical Tech engages in reflective exercises frequently as the need and time arises. She felt that these spontaneous reflective engagements within Tactical Tech were adequate to ensure critical awareness and learning. Despite seeing its value, Tactical Tech and partners considered the PAR activities as an add-on, rather than a central component to reaching its goals and objectives. Systematic reflection, with partners, as part of a larger action research initiative was therefore not prioritized, given the managerial, financial, technical and other project implementation priorities and concerns. The distance, financial complexities and numerous partners made this project a challenging one. r e a c h staff felt that the lack of communication systems across partners made it difficult for them to support learning and the need for coordination around the action research cycles. While Tactical Tech agreed to scheduling conference calls as they were needed, they felt it was not feasible to institutionalize regularly scheduled conference calls for coordination and management purposes. There were several competing priorities at the time and as will be discussed below, their management style lends itself to a more ad hoc and 'hands off' approach. While the evaluation team emphasized the critical importance of the self-assessment exercises for the project, this was not well understood throughout most of the project lifecycle. r e a c h provided guidance on the use of the tool via phone conversations and emails. It surprised

the evaluation team when there was no follow through because there was still confusion among Tactical Tech staff as the quotes below indicate:

*We were unclear about the action research cycle; that we were supposed to facilitate the tool periodically and we didn't understand how to use the tool appropriately.*

*I thought I was supposed to be reviewing proposed changes to the self-reflective tool with the WNU Secretariat; I didn't get instructions about the self-assessment until after meeting with WNU.*

Both Tactical Tech and r e a c h evaluators agree that the lack of ongoing communication and mutual understanding on the importance of action research cycles represent two of the primary stumbling blocks to success of PAR. The Tactical Tech director feels that Tactical Tech did not fully understand the Action Research component of the project. He now feels that r e a c h should have been much clearer. In contrast, r e a c h feels they had discussed it on several occasions, attempting to solicit Tactical Tech's buy-in which did not take place until the last quarter of the project. While Tactical Tech assured r e a c h that they understood the nature of Action Research on a few occasions, Tactical Tech feels that r e a c h should not have assumed that they in fact fully understood Action Research, the implications of Action Research and the requirements for this project.

Perhaps most importantly, the tool requires time and attention. Tactical Tech and the implementing partners have multiple competing priorities. As useful as the self-reflective exercises were to the implementing partners, Tactical Tech feels it is also seen as a burden. It is perhaps for this reason alone, that Tactical Tech's support for the reflective practice sessions were not forthcoming. Challenges to obtain the minimal outputs assumed Tactical Tech's time and focus. Reflective sessions did not represent immediate concerns and therefore relegated a lower priority.

### **r e a c h's self-reflections**

The evaluation partners at r e a c h have also reflected on how their contributions may have improved both communication and a more rigorous engagement with a reflective practice approach. These include:

- 1) r e a c h evaluators feel that more Action Research and evaluation capacity building should have been built into the project cycle from the beginning. For example, preceding an early WNU site visit, r e a c h had assumed Tactical Tech would conduct the action plan follow up and review the tool as had been agreed upon on the phone and email correspondence. In actuality, Tactical Tech did not understand how to build an action plan into the already existing Tactical Tech workplan. R e a c h was unaware that there was a work plan. Ongoing stronger communication and face to face meetings, rather than adhoc communication, may have assuaged these problems.
- 2) Creating alignment across partners, preferably through a launch meeting had not taken place as had been originally planned. This would have generated both understanding and greater buy-in. Participants did not see themselves as integral part of evaluation team, since questions focused on the project and less on the evaluation. R e a c h staff may have insisted on creating alignment if they were to proceed in their role as evaluation partner.





Figure 6. WNU Secretariat Member Shares Visualizations

3) We could have anticipated high turnover of key staff and plan for it by involving more permanent staff to ensure continuity.

4) The evaluators could have taken greater initiative in dissemination of baseline and needs assessment findings which could not have only build ownership towards PAR but also enhanced use of

findings. We were unclear if the baseline findings were used by WNU or DMSC and ensured they were used.

5) Consolidating one review exercise with Tactical Tech who conducted a needs assessment and r e a c h who conducted a baseline study would have avoided duplication, fostered Tactical Tech's ownership of the evaluation and cultivated a team approach rather than separate parallel activities conducted by Tactical Tech and r e a c h.

6) Evaluation-utilization was not built into the original project design, though it was discussed early in the project cycle. Evaluation-utilization discussions took place during the second year when it became clear that the action research cycles had not taken hold by any of the partners.

#### 4. Challenges and barriers

Both WNU and DMSC expressed concerns about **integrating documentation and visualizations into a focused advocacy strategy**. Specifically, they expressed concerns about how to use the data and visualizations effectively in their attempts to reach government audiences. During the initial meeting with WNU, for example, secretariat members described a need to use data and visualizations within a larger organizational mandate to advocate for change. Similarly, DMSC staff frequently expressed their limitations in using documentation and visualizations in an effective advocacy plan. According to one DMSC staff,

*We have been learning documentation and we now have information. But we should also use it in our next step in our advocacy organization wide... we want a specific advocacy plan for our groups. What every plan we have is not usable to execute for our stakeholders.*

Similarly, WNU expressed challenges related to how they should proceed once data is collected, analyzed, interpreted and visualizations are generated. As DMSC, WNU staff and secretariat members often expressed a need for more skills and support to initiate advocacy plans. In a focus group discussion, two active members in the secretariat reported,

*We have been learning documentation, we have information but we should now have the next steps in our advocacy [plans].*

*We want to have a specific advocacy plan for our groups. We have a plan but we are not able to use it and execute it among stakeholders.*

Consistent with these reports, Tactical Tech also identified a need to focus resources on building advocacy skills. Tactical Tech felt that WNU and DMSC could become more strategic and evidenced based when attempting to pursue change. This issue came up in both the needs assessment and baseline studies. It appeared, however, that there was insufficient time to fully develop those skills among partners, given the intensive focus on documentation, visualization development and ongoing dilemmas that took place as a result of miscommunication, lack of funds and competing priorities.

Both WNU and DMSC are **working in complex and volatile environments**. Changing and precarious relationships with government and anti-trafficking stakeholders, for example, had left DMSC feeling unsure about how to proceed effectively. For example, DMSC staff repeatedly expressed concerns about sharing their data with the police. While they were enthusiastic about the documentation, they felt there would be a backlash from the police-allies, as police were identified as the most frequent perpetrators of violence in the visualizations. These were unexpected findings which DMSC felt unprepared to handle. As a result, DMSC staff have been somewhat immobilized by the survey findings and unable to move forward in sharing findings in an effective manner.

Similarly, the WNU secretariat and staff expressed concerns about the complex environment in which they now operate. The now two-year old anti trafficking law creates challenges for an activist group such as WNU to advocate on behalf of sex workers who are not supposed to exist. WNU attempts to raise awareness that sex workers are harassed and abused in a context where sex work is illegal. In several settings police use anti-prostitution laws to harass, threaten, arrest, beat and sexually coerce sex workers. When interviewed, a very senior government official indicated that he would like to work with WNU but is unable to when WNU activists publically pronounce sex work is work.

*I keep telling [the WNU technical advisor] that I can work with you as long as you do not talk about sex work. I cannot since it's against the law and the constitution. If WNU talks about health and safety then we can work together. If they talk about sex work then they block everything.*

As this quote indicates, the current politico-legal context becomes an almost untenable environment in which to work. WNU staff and secretariat recognize ways that their mandate

contrasts with that of the government and the new law. They are one of two or three groups that have taken public stands on behalf of sex worker rights. While both WNU and associated government agencies aim to reduce the burden of HIV among sex workers in Cambodia, WNU has additional concerns related to sex workers' rights to livelihood and wellbeing. WNU would like to work cooperatively with government authorities but maintain that they must balance government demands with their continued commitment to sex workers' structural concerns within the current adverse political climate.

Indeed, sex worker movements, across world, are struggling with a range of structural barriers characterized by anti-trafficking lobbies' effective threats in changing laws, less donor support, less institutional support from weakening UN agencies, increasingly indifferent government agencies and deteriorating partnerships with other community based agencies. This has led to a context in which organizations such as WNU and DMSC have become increasingly isolated placing them into increasingly vulnerable terrain. Not surprisingly, WNU and DMSC are facing the same challenges observed in some of the more hostile-to-sex work global trends. This requires sophisticated external support from partnering agencies and regional and global sex worker networks and other movements. It was not in Tactical Tech's mandate to address these concerns. However, the relative fragile contexts in which sex worker agencies exist perhaps require another layer of attention that partnering and donor agencies should consider when helping them navigate.

Both DMSC and WNU reported challenges in **collecting survey data**. Interviewees were reluctant to participate for a range of reasons. Finding suitable times and private spaces to interview community members were often cited as challenges. During the day light hours, sex workers are sleepy since they work during the night. In the evenings and nights they do not want to be disturbed from work. During the initial days, community members expressed reticence to respond to the list of questions posed by the interviewers. As one interviewee and interviewer, associated with WNU, expressed,

*I felt afraid when the interviewer asked me if I were a sex worker.*

Sex worker, interviewee

*At first sex workers were worried that we would go to the police with their interviews. So we had to gain their trust before they would talk to us. The second time we interviewed them we gave a good introduction.*

Sex worker, interviewer

As these quotes reveal, interviewees often felt that the interviewers were conspiring with the police against them on the side of the police. As a result, sex workers did not agree to be interviewed and many who agreed to be interviewed did not share experiences considered sensitive. WNU and DMSC interviewers also complained about not having money or gifts for interviewees which is generally the expected compensation within the HIV sector. In WNU they dealt with this problem by describing the purpose of the study in clear and understandable terms. As compensation for their time, interviewees were told that the findings would be used to advocate on their behalf. The second round of interviews went more smoothly as a result.

Respondents from DMSC and WNU reported that the Tactical Tech intervention took a lot of time and required a lot of support, given the complexity of the outputs. The **lack of senior level guidance and support** represents a key challenge in this project. As the coordinator of the WNU secretariat reveals,

*We spend much time on Tactical Tech project—training, then data collection, then review questionnaire, technology... we lack of technology. Transfer what we got from sex worker, transfer it to data and then data interpretation... for us it's very difficult. We had to think a lot. Should we design and do poster? For example, we have written and voice recordings. How do we use them? We had to put on voice, and figure out proper use of voice. How do we use voice to support the data? So we need help from [the technical advisor – see below]. Sex worker members... there is lack of knowledge, illiteracy. Sometimes they forget what they are doing and why they are interviewing. Then they need to be reminded that they did a study for advocacy.*

WNU garnered a great deal of support from one of the unofficial leaders of WNU, designated as a technical advisor. She brings in a tremendous amount of leadership, experience and conceptual skills to the team. DMSC, on the other hand, was unable to draw from that kind of support beyond the first year. While the Chief Advisor was available to help DMSC staff through the first phase of developing their interview instruments and collecting data, such ongoing support was not available, particularly given the lack of funds available for his time. Tactical Tech managers were not based at the sites and therefore managed remotely. Tactical Tech staff feel that several of the managerial problems could have been resolved in this way. WNU struggled with managerial and technical support in relation to staff capacity and what was required for the project. As Tactical Tech respondents iterate, despite the lack of managerial and technical support, they still managed to have a successful project

**Monitoring, managing and supportive oversight was inconsistent**, particularly in DMSC. It was felt that more presence from Tactical Tech would have benefited the project and prevented ongoing misunderstandings, delays and lack of project outputs from DMSC staff. For example, the project did not operate from an agreed-upon work plan at the regional or country level. Monitoring mechanisms were not visible to the evaluators. It appeared that expectations of outputs were unclear. Perhaps most importantly, communication systems were not established. According to senior DMSC staff,

*This project did not function in a manner we are accustomed to where the managers sit with the staff, draft a work plan, monitor through reports and communicate regularly.*

The lack of systems described in the quote above seems to have led, in part, to ongoing difficulties and set-backs voiced by Tactical Tech throughout the life of the project. For example, Tactical Tech expressed concerns over premature implementation of the survey by DMSC staff. According to Tactical Tech, the quote above signifies issues with lack of clarity within DMSC's organizational structure and communication. Tactical Tech had anticipated that DMSC would wait for Tactical Tech Collective's instruction before collecting data on their own. They feel this would have produced stronger survey outputs. DMSC, however, had a different understanding. Staff felt that several months had passed without direction from Tactical Tech and they needed to take action. With the intent not to postpone the program any longer, DMSC developed the

research instrument and implemented the survey with support of very senior DMSC staff as described above. To DMSC's surprise, Tactical Tech was dissatisfied with the survey outputs. In contrast, Tactical Tech had expected DMSC to wait for direction from them, before proceeding. Tactical Tech's understanding of the course of events is quite different. According to Tactical Tech, they had engaged with DMSC with training on survey design when they did the needs assessment, three months into the project cycle. They feel that DMSC began working on the survey prematurely without the essential Tactical Tech support. Tactical Tech often stated that they were available for DMSC whenever they needed support which they could obtain through phone calls, emails or skype correspondence.

Another misunderstanding relates to translation of the visualizations which has slowed down the process by over six months. According to DMSC, they provided Bengali language for the visualizations. They felt the translation provided by the company hired to prepare the visualizations was extremely inadequate. According to Tactical Tech, the visualizations were delayed because DMSC had not sent them the finalized version without the typos. According to Tactical Tech this demonstrates the need for on-site management support.

WNU, in contrast, did not require much oversight. According to WNU's senior technical advisor, 'we like to do things on our own and approach TTC only when we are stuck.' When asked about Tactical Tech's management approach, WNU felt their technical contributions were of greatest value and that management needs were minimal, particularly given the distance. As the technical adviser describes,

*Tactical Tech is very far, but their focus is not on programming. They always check on how far we got with documentation, requesting us to send excel spread sheets, or asking us if we can translate the data. Usually they ask about the program and difficulty they faced.*

WNU felt Tactical Tech's management style was supportive. They appreciated the 'hands off' approach and availability when they were needed. With the support of a senior technical advisory, they developed their own work plan and management style on their own. According to her, they needed someone to question clarity of the output with guidance on how to use the visuals. They felt that while they had a work plan, developed on their own, they could not move on areas related to the advocacy strategy. But when asked whether they could have used more support, WNU senior staff stated,

*Tactical Tech doesn't give day-to-day implementation. They give support when we ask. They also give capacity building – training. They facilitated a 3-days training and were very slow, patient...*

The **project partners worked in isolation** in parallel fashion. The evaluators found that this was pronounced by the lack of ongoing communication across partners and lack of documentation in the form of reports shared with the evaluators and partners, monitoring outputs and phone or person-to-person meetings. For example, r e a c h had suggested regular monthly phone calls to ensure activities, action research cycles and support were forthcoming across partners. In contrast, Tactical Tech believes that cross communication between WNU and DMSC would not have facilitated learning as "they were in very different stages in developing their documentation

and advocacy work.” For example, DMSC’s needs assessment was done earlier at which time Tactical Tech determined that DMSC required more focus on advocacy than on digital technology. Tactical Tech feels there were indeed reports and sufficient communication even though they were not regularly scheduled.

Unfortunately, however, the lack of communication led to a duplication of work between Tactical Tech and r e a c h, as well as lack of partner alignment and missed learning opportunities. For example, the Tactical Tech team conducted a needs assessment which was immediately followed by the evaluation team baseline in Cambodia and Kolkata. This could have been avoided if the Tactical Tech and r e a c h teams conducted the assessments together and engaged in joint design and planning with the implementing partners.

Similarly, Tactical Tech developed an Atlas of Sex Work concept which helped consolidate Tactical Tech’s own thinking. However, DMSC and WNU did not understand or ‘own’ the concept which they felt was too ambitious and complex. Perhaps this may not have happened if a modified version of the Atlas of Sex Work concept was generated together with implementing and evaluation partners. Such an approach, with communication mechanisms between and across the four partners, would have not only generated an agreed upon project framework and logic, it would have enhanced learning opportunities and growth which was a missed opportunity.

**Miscommunication**, perhaps in part as a result of “hand off” management approach, frequently occurred with DMSC. Communication and working styles differed across the partners. Misunderstandings and disagreements led to lack of trust. One primary misunderstanding relates to the start date. DMSC was under the impression that the project began on January 2010, when Tactical Tech received funds. In contrast, Tactical Tech had delayed the start dates until the needs assessment and recommendations were complete (June 2012). As a result, DMSC hired staff and began collecting data to build evidence from that date (January 2010). Another recent misunderstanding relates to the Bengali translations of the visuals. DMSC felt that the quality of translations made by the company which created the visuals was substandard. In contrast, Tactical Tech stated that the translations were made by DMSC themselves and did not understand why the translations were unacceptable. When Tactical Tech approached DMSC about the translation problems, DMSC said there were no translation problems rather with the fonts and a few of the words. Other misunderstandings related to the project start date, agreed-upon-budgets, payment and remittance of funds left several staff without salaries and compensation.

Tactical Tech felt that miscommunication with DMSC related also to differing understandings on previous agreements such as how and when funding was to be used. Tactical Tech reported that lack of openness and transparency on DMSC’s part led to a number of setbacks and barriers to successful development of outputs.

Both DMSC and WNU expressed the need for **more time and funding** to see the advocacy initiatives which were begun to completion. DMSC staff indicated that they received funding for one year. However, according to Tactical Tech the original agreement was a grant for two years which Tactical Tech felt was not communicated to the junior staff. The sensitivity and

complexity of the project outputs requires more time, capacity building, monitoring and coaching than a one year period. According to two senior staff,

*As we are working with community we need time to get things done. But the TTC funding stopped before project completion. The project ended abruptly with lot of work still incomplete. For example, the data on evictions was collected but remains unused.*

*Funding was irregular and inadequate. Several staff did not get salaries for months and there was not enough for conveyance—West Bengal is a large state. DMSC could not cover conveyance for everything. All this demotivated staff.*

According to Tactical Tech Collective, these problems occurred as a result of DMSC's internal management problems and not due to lack of time and funding. When Tactical Tech Collective tried to work with the teams, beyond the first year, it was difficult to get their time. Staff were either gone or assigned to other projects.

**Ongoing iterative self-reflection** events did not take place regularly. According to WNU and DMSC, on-sight support was lacking. Remote support through skype was not feasible in both WNU and DMSC. The evaluation team feels that it was a mistake to rely solely on the evaluation team to support the action research component of this initiative. Tactical Tech had not understood the importance of the action research component around the intervention. Therefore the reflective sessions of the project lied in the hands of the evaluators who had difficulty scheduling sessions with the teams. In November 2011, it was mutually agreed upon that Tactical Tech would take responsibility of ensuring the SA events take place. It was then decided that the partners would facilitate their own exercises. Unfortunately, however, only one self-assessment exercise took place by one partner after this was decided. A series of quarterly scheduled self-assessment events did not take place as had been hoped. WNU conducted a self-assessment exercise on their own which they found extremely useful (see appendix 3). Their only complaint was that they spent six hours on the exercise, which discouraged them from scheduling future exercises. Nonetheless, this reflective exercise was the turning point in generating and using data for WNU's first evidence-based advocacy campaign.

Reflective discussions between *re a c h* and Tactical Tech revealed that a launch meeting, as was originally envisaged, would have been a constructive opportunity to build capacity and come to a mutual agreement across all partners, related to requirements for an action research project. As *re a c h* reflects on its own shortcomings, the consultants acknowledge that much more evaluation capacity building was required for Tactical Tech, WNU and DMSC to ensure agreement and mutual responsibility in supporting reflective practice. This would have been best accomplished during a launch meeting. Developing self assessment tools for implementing partners and encouraging their use was not enough to ensure ongoing reflection with the support of Tactical Tech as the lead agency.

## **5. Moving forward- utilization of evaluation findings**

Both WNU and DMSC are preparing ways to engage in more evidenced based advocacy work, relying on images and technical communication methodologies. As part of the reflection and analysis workshops, in both WNU and DMSC, stakeholders identified key ways to ensure that





**Figure 7 Government Official Refers to WNU Tool lying on his desk when evaluators arrived for a formal interview.**

the findings from the evaluation would be integrated into their future work. For example, staff at DMSC designed an advocacy initiative that would take place in the International Sex Worker Freedom Festival in DMSC at the end of July. During this exercise, we discussed key lessons related to barriers that kept them from moving forward

such as articulating use of data that is visually appealing to multiple audiences. Efforts to promote communication and overcome misunderstandings will be facilitated by DMSC. The research consultant and co-author of this evaluation will facilitate a learning discussion between DMSC and WNU at the Freedom Festival. A plan to integrate evaluation findings will be developed.

When discussing ways WNU could utilize evaluation findings, the secretariat and staff suggested that the evaluation lessons be integrated in an organization-wide strategy guided by a self-assessment tool. research guided them through a one and half-day process to that end (see appendix 4). A key component to the self-assessment tool, for example, is the thematic direction to improve relationships with stakeholders. In addition, through a number of discussions, the evaluation team helped WNU shift the self-assessment framework from one that was isolationist to one that is more integrated with society. WNU staff and secretariat members had designed a vision in which WNU would have access to separate sex worker hospitals, schools and gardens. This vision and framework shifted to a world in which stigma would be eliminated in hospitals, schools and other public spaces.

Both WNU and DMSC have adapted Tactical Tech interventions in their other projects. For example, WNU and DMSC staff both report that they use the questionnaire developed in the project as a kind of monitoring tool to assess levels and responses to violence in the communities. They envisage that through this, they will be able to observe trends while also maintaining linkages with the remote districts and provinces. Both WNU and DMSC have begun to use documentation and visualization as part of the Center for Legal Services (CLS) project at WNU and “children of sex work project” and “Self Regulatory Board” projects at DMSC.

Tactical Tech will discuss the evaluation findings during the next senior staff meeting. They will plan how to use the findings in future and ongoing programs across Tactical Tech. Tactical Tech respondents have discussed key areas of change that will be further explored including,

- a) facilitate cooperation and alignment between Tactical Tech and evaluation teams; and,

- b) assume greater responsibility to support and facilitate action research cycles.

## 6. Discussion

The observed achievements in the *Action research project on getting sex workers' voices heard in Asia* were evident across both intervention sites. Both DMSC and WNU made conceptual and attitude shifts regarding their approaches to advocacy. While DMSC had not yet implemented the use of their data, they shifted perspectives from 'reactive' to 'pro-active' advocacy approaches during the interviews. WNU began using the evidence through the use of mini-posters which they shared with the sex worker community and government stakeholders. This strategic approach showed a shift in perspectives. They received confirmation of its effectiveness through the positive responses by government and UNAIDS counterparts. This reinforced their attitudes.

Improvement in WNU- and DMSC-relationships with sex worker communities was an unintended achievement. Not only did they cultivate trust during the survey exercises, they also conveyed their relevance as advocates for sex workers in relation to the laws and violence perpetrated by a range of stakeholders.

Both WNU and DMSC improved their research and documentation skills. They started with having had little or no experience in data collection and analysis. Both organizations now have experience with seeing a study through from conceptualization, design, implementation, analysis to development of visuals for dissemination.

Tactical Tech and partners also faced challenges. The focus of Tactical Tech's work has been tools-development and capacities to generate evidence and develop visualizations for advocacy tactical purposes. However, WNU and DMSC also required skills in conceptualizing, developing and implementing advocacy strategies which was not part of the design.

As is the current scenario with other sex worker rights organizations, WNU and DMSC are facing unfavorable and often inimical environments. Supporting sex worker partners to develop an enabling environment may be an important first step for use of complex documentation and digital technology to thrive. While it may not have been in Tactical Tech's mandate to address these concerns, more needs to be done in the design of future projects to ensure that sex worker organizations, such as DMSC and WNU can be successful in using the outputs produced through Tactical Tech's efforts. That is, Tactical Tech Collective may want to focus more on basic advocacy strategy development such as identifying audiences, messages, messengers and priority advocacy issues during the first year of a project. The second year could focus more on advocacy tactics such as the use of evidence, visualizations and data. This may require a project that is three years duration, instead of two years.

More deliberate and adaptive management and communication approaches and mechanisms may have helped Tactical Tech partnerships remain in closer alignment throughout the course of the project. In doing so, the evaluation team could have played a more functional role in cross-learning activities and in developing evaluative thinking and capacity among partners. While



**Figure 8. Utilizing Evaluation Findings: WNU develops an organization-wide self-assessment tool**

some partners, such as WNU function well without external support, systems and structures such as a simple monitoring, agreed upon workplans, reporting and communication plan may have prevented some of the miscommunication and produced stronger outcomes. The evaluation team could have played a stronger role, early in the project, in emphasizing the function of action research approaches and which inputs are required from the lead and implementing agencies. In doing so, a deliberate capacity building plan,

on participatory action research, could have gone a long way. This may have ensured active engagement in regularly scheduled action research (self-assessment) cycles as had been hoped. Tactical Tech's role in supporting action learning cycles should have been more prominent throughout the life of the project.

DMSC and WNU have identified ways to utilize lessons learned from the evaluation. These were facilitated during the final evaluation visit and were integrated in action plans related to the sex workers forthcoming freedom festival and in WNU's organization-wide self assessment framework.

## **8. Recommendations**

### **1. Improved management systems**

Improve management systems when working with multiple partners. While an ad-hoc and as-needed approach to management is useful with some organizations such as WNU, it does not work well with others. A structured reporting system with regular communication with all partners will ensure that organizations are in alignment and no confusions.

Recommendation 1.1 Establish reporting and monitoring mechanisms early on that are will facilitate effective management;

Recommendation 1.2 provide (lite) documentation of site visits, meetings, needs assessments, workshops and share with partners to maintain a record and facilitate learning;

Recommendation 1.3 In addition to the reflective practice sessions, develop a monitoring framework, tools and systems that are simple and generated collectively.

Recommendation 1.4 Ensure there is a full- or part-time staff person at each of the sites when working in multiple sites.

## **2. Support for Participatory Action Research**

Ensure collective understandings and support for action research. The self-assessment tool and sessions were appreciated; however sessions did not occur regularly as had been expected. Apart from the first and last sessions facilitated by the evaluation team, only one session took place during the two years between, in both WNU and DMSC. To facilitate a working culture in which partners work collectively rather than working in silos, certain systems and structures need to be in place.

Recommendation 2.1 Build capacity and understanding (through evaluation partners) of action research among both Tactical Tech and implementing partners. This may be best accomplished in a launch meeting. If not, Tactical Tech Collective may consider working with the evaluation team and implementing partners at the individual sites.

Recommendation 2.2 Operate alongside the action research partner to ensure that there is proper alignment. This means conducting the needs assessments/baselines simultaneously, facilitating or accompanying partners during the action research sessions, and sharing action plans and reflections across partners.

Recommendation 2.3 Tactical Tech Collective should take on a greater role in facilitating action research cycles. The evaluation team can play a supportive, technical and capacity building role.

## **3. Improved advocacy skills development**

Both WNU and DMSC have engaged in reactive advocacy approaches. General principles and skills in evidence based advocacy which leads to a pre-determined advocacy goals did not take place early on in the project. These basic understandings are necessary before evidence is generated.

Recommendation 3.1 Conduct a short advocacy workshop to facilitate conceptual and practical understandings of how to conduct advocacy using evidence. This would include lessons on identifying advocacy issues, audiences, messages, messengers and

## **4. Knowledge management**

Learning across partners could have been enhanced. Both WNU and DMSC could have gained from learning which could have been facilitated by the evaluation team.

Recommendation 4.1 develop a platform for learning, drawing on evaluation team capacities. These could have taken the form of developing a community of practice, email groups, social networking platforms and skype or phone calls to connect the two teams to share experiences, transfer learning, and generate new knowledge.

Recommendation 4.2 If funds permit, cross learning visits can motivate, inspire and build



## Appendix 1. Analysis and Self-Assessment Workshop Agendas

### DMSC Analysis Workshop 17-18 May, 2012

| Time/date            | Activity  |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Thurs; 11:00</b>  | 1. SA exercise  |
| <b>13:00</b>         | 2. SWOT   |
|                      | 3. Review findings on Successes and Review findings on Challenges   |
| <b>Lunch 14:00</b>   |   |
| <b>15:00</b>         | 4. Advocacy Planning (see below)  |
| <b>Friday: 11:00</b> | Review objectives and Thursday's outputs  |
| <b>11:15</b>         | <b>Creating and Planning advocacy using data, old (and generating new) visuals</b><br>Divide in teams to plan the content of each advocacy 'issue' in relation to audiences. Teams should consider in detail: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exact messages</li> <li>Roles and responsibilities</li> <li>Anticipating risks               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans to overcome risks</li> </ol> </li> <li>Materials required</li> <li>Where/when</li> <li>Action plan to ensure it takes place</li> </ol> |
| <b>13:00</b>         | <b>Present ideas</b>  |
| <b>14:00</b>         | <b>Evaluation</b>   |

| Advocacy Planning                         |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| Audiences                                 | Issues  | Data   | Medium   |
| Conference participants, including donors | - Sex workers in DMSC face violence;<br>- Sex workers are discriminated against | 74,074 crimes against 60,000 sex workers- over 10 months<br><br>Case study of dead baby in arms of FSW | Posters<br>Flip charts<br>Theater<br>Audio, video testimonies<br>Dance<br>Music<br>Mural |
| Police                                    |   |  |  |

### WNU TTC Analysis Workshop 24-25 May, 2012

| Time/date         | Activity  |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>Thurs 8:30</b> | 1. Self assessment exercise for TTC project                 |
| <b>10:30</b>      | 2. Review and discussion of preliminary evaluation findings |



|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>11:00</b>        | 3. Dream building exercise for Self assessment framework for WNU as an organization   |
| <b>Lunch 12:00</b>  |   |
| <b>14:00</b>        | a. Group Dreams   |
|                     | b. Compile a common dream for WNU as an organization in the year 2022   |
| <b>Friday: 8:30</b> | Review the WNU dream and compile a self assessment framework, a knowledge management tool for tracking progress and self reflection.                |
| <b>Lunch 12:00</b>  |   |
| <b>13:00</b>        | <b>Facilitation of self assessment-</b><br>where we are at present in WNU as an organization and where we want to go in next six months             |
| <b>14:00-17:00</b>  | <b>Action planning-</b><br>To divide participants which will compile an action plan for three practices each, who will take on which responsibility |

## Appendix 2. Timeline of the project

| Month and year     | Intervention   |
|--------------------|--|
| Sep-09             | Maya and Dirk attend Huridocs Training in Geneva to learn about uses databases for aggregating and managing human rights violations.   |
| Second half - 2009 | Changes in project plan -Tactical Tech's main contact in DMSC moves on to a new job. Also, one of groups that was initially listed as a partner pulls out, VAMP.               |
| Jan-10             | Project DMSC start data collection begins  |
| Mar-10             | Calcutta India, Maya and Dirk do Needs assessment in DMSC.   |
| Mar-10             | Delhi, India - Tactical Tech meeting with IDRC donor; Tactical Tech meeting with Veronica  |
| Jun-10             | Tactical Tech developed the DMSC Atlas of Sex Work Concept, with 5 microprojects. The Atlas of Sex Work concept allowed focus on outputs rather than process of documentation. |
| Aug-10             | Kolkata- r e a c h conducts baseline assessment at DMSC; r e a c h/DMSC developed DMSC self assessment tool for participatory action research (PAR).                           |
| Sep-10             | Tactical Tech conducts WNU Needs assessment.   |
| Sep-10             | TTC develops Atlas of Sex Work concept for WNU   |
| Nov-10             | DMSC Calcutta - TTC holds a four day Workshop on audiences, messages and data for two microprojects.   |
| Dec-10             | Key staff person on the project, Paromita, leaves; Develop the brief for the new info designer from NID, Mouli Nath to work on the visualisations                              |
| Dec-10             | WNU responds to AoSW concept paper saying that the ideas mostly don't work for them but also gave suggestions for a good way to pull together their main objectives            |
| Dec-10             | Key staff person on the DMSC project, Paromita, leaves; TTC develop the brief for the new info designer from NID, Mouli Nath to work on the visualisations.                    |
| Dec-10             | WNU prepares poster with data collected through the survey and used in a meeting on International Day to end violence against Sex workers                                      |
| Jan-11             | TTC does follow-up visit to DMSC to clarify finance issues, move ahead with microprojects and introduce designer<br>Reach facilitates dream building and self assessment       |
| Jan-11             | TTC Visits WNU to work out details of microprojects for the Atlas  |
| Feb-11             | Working with an info designer Mouli the designer cleans up the data and does some basic graphs to show the behaviour of the data   |
| Mar-11             | Veronica with WNU and Rituu joined through skype facilitate Self assessment  |

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| Mar-11 | Interim report to IDRC  |
| May-11 | Maya and Dirk visit WNU for training on data collection. Chor Chantyda from Cambodia Centre for Human Rights does the workshop with 20 WNU staff and members on using video and audio |
| Jun-11 | First conversation with Mediashala (design firm in Ahmedabad) on producing graphics based on the DMSC data  |
| Jun-11 | Rituu and Maya attempt skype facilitation of self assessment with DMSC  |
| Sep-11 | Key project person in WNU, Nayheng, moves to a big new project on legal aid for sex workers.  |
| Oct-11 | Self assessment with WNU through skype  |
| Nov-11 | Mediashala produce draft visuals - graphics - based on DMSC's data on 'who victimises sex workers'.   |
| Nov-11 | India- First face to face meeting between Reach and TTC on all aspects of the project and the research component  |
| Nov-11 | Maya and Dirk review with DMSC the draft visuals from Mediashala. TTC facilitate Self Assessment process with DMSC  |
| Jan-12 | Veronica and Rituu facilitate Self assessment with TTC on skype   |
| Feb-12 | Mediashala revise graphics ; DMSC start on translations of text into Hindi and Bengali  |
| Feb-12 | WNU does their Self Assessment  |
| Mar-12 | Veronica and Rituu conduct self assessment and action planning facilitated by with TTC  |
| May-12 | Reach conduct endline evaluation with WNU and DMSC and facilitate the final self assessment   |
| Jun-12 | Reach conduct interviews with TTC team<br>Project Ends  |

### Appendix 3. Self Assessment Framework- DMSC and WNU

| SELF ASSESMENT TOOL- TTC project (DMSC) |   |   |   |                     |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---------------------|--|--|
| S. No.                                  | PRACTICES   | LEVEL 1   | LEVEL 2   | LEVEL 3             | LEVEL 4  | LEVEL 5  |
|   |   | KNOWLEDGE   | REACTION  | ACTION              | SYSTEMATIC   | LIFE STYLE(2012)   |
| 1                                       | We have a methodology of documentation (Aggregating, Collating,visually representing information)     | We have knowledge & do documentation but do not have the capacity or processes to use the documentation for advocacy purposes | We are equipped and have aggregated, collated data for both micro projects        | We are at level 3.5 |  | Part of standard response in DMSC, documentation for all projects feeding into advocacy outputs and strategies |
| 2                                       | We tailor information or data for specific audience(Police , Policy maker, Public, Media, Sex worker) |   | Need based, not regular   | 3                   | 3.5  | Advocacy has a positive desired impact on target audience  |
| 3                                       | We have Capacity for & do evidence based advocacy in DMSC   | There is a lack of skills+ awareness of this kind of advocacy but data exists.  | 2.5   | 3                   |  | Everybody knows how to collect , collate & package information for target audience in campaign                 |
| 4                                       | Eviction regulated in sex work sites  |   | When threats are made, DMSC has a rapid response mechanism to support sex workers | 3.5                 | 3.8  | Sex workers are able to voice their rights not to be evicted+ perpetrators know evidence has been collected    |
| 5                                       | Resource mobilisation (people, capacity building, finances)   |   |   | 2.5                 |  | Total funding for completion, sharing+ replication+ human resource management+ data entry design               |
| 6                                       | Reflective Practice   | We feel the need for reflective practice on the project progress but do not know how to do it                                 |   | 3                   | We use self assessment tool in both Kolkata office and districts | We regularly use self assessment tool for all our projects in DMSC   |

| <b>TTC/WNU Self Assessment Tool</b> |                       |                             |  |   |   |                             |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|---|-----------------------------|
| <b>S. NO.</b>                       | <b>PRACTICES</b>      | <b>LEVEL 1</b><br>awareness | <b>LEVEL 2</b><br>React  | <b>LEVEL 3</b><br>perform some actions  | <b>LEVEL 4</b><br>systematically /regularly | <b>LEVEL 5</b><br>lifestyle |
| 1                                   | Campaigns             |                             |  | 3.7 we do campaigns regularly and use data. The cases of arrest and , violations, detention have reduce. When we showed NAA which said that they will include the data in report to Ministry of Health.   |   |                             |
| 2                                   | relationship building |                             |  | 3.25 We are at different levels of relationships of with different stakeholders. We have relationship with Smart girls as they work on health issues we take their support. We work with CPU. We invite smart girls when we have meetings on legal issues. We also attend meetings of UNAIDS and NAA.   |   |                             |
| 3                                   | case studies          |                             |  | 3.5 We have transformed data into survey and waiting for final visualisation; Number of 158 sex workers interviewed written out of which 45 are audio interviews  |   |                             |
| 4                                   | surveys               |                             |  | 3 we were invited to meeting they would not talk about AT law, now regularly we talk about AT because have evidence and data. In phnom penh we do surveys every week during outreach. We go to province every three months and do it. Since the training from TTC we have been using TTC tool for other issues like Health, migration, living situations. |   |                             |
| 5                                   | M&E/reflecti on       |                             | 2.5 We have improved in this tool. "I will take this tool with you everywhere" Kothea. Its very dear to us.We find easier than before. Useful to learn so far, where we are now and where we can go. It is helpful because it teaches us to analyse ourselves we don't need money to hire external evaluators. It helps us to reflect on our work. |   |   |                             |

## Appendix 4. Self-Assessment of WNU for the organization as a whole

| WNU self assessment for organisation |   |  |  |  |         |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|--|---------|---|
| S No                                 | Practice  | Level 1  | Level 2  | Level 3  | Level 4 | level 5   |
| 1                                    | Our children access quality education   |  | 2.5 because some sex worker children access education in DICs but others don't due to poverty  |  |         | All children access schools throughout Cambodia. Teachers are certified with pedagogy certified through govt policy   |
| 2                                    | Poor communities including sex workers & EWs access quality and free health care                |  |  | Some access health services sometimes and some cannot because do not have id proof |         | All sex workers and entertainment workers access quality, friendly available healthcare services throughout Cambodia  |
| 3                                    | sex workers & EWs access quality legal services   |  | 2.5 Some sex workers from WNU access legal services of WNU and some from public legal services but from provinces this is not easy to access |  |         | All sws and ews access free, quality , friendly available legal services throughout Cambodia  |
| 4                                    | sex workers and entertainment workers have access to Diverse income generation and loan service |  | WE know what it is to be done but are not doing anything except some of the TGs  |  |         | Sws and Ews who want to diversify income engage effectively in small and medium enterprise  |
| 5                                    | Sex workers and entertainment workers access utilities and government entitlements              | We just know about the services but are not doing anything |  |  |         | All Sws and Ews access to public service that is affordable   |
| 6                                    | sex workers and entertainment workers access to social concession                               | We just dream about it                                     |  |  |         | SW and EW collective ownership and management of land , centrally located.  |
| 7                                    | Relationship with general community, Govt, NGO and international partners                       |  |  | We meet them in meetings are trying to collaborate cross-sector                    |         | We are equal partners collaborating with each other   |
| 8                                    | We strengthen and expand WNU throughout Cambodia  |  |  | We have 6000 members in WNU but not all are active                                 |         | WNU has 20,000 members who are active and have sense of ownership throughout Cambodia including freelance sws, MSM, TG, lesbian, Karaoke bar dancers, massage parlours, & Ews |



# Appendix 4

**Using Technology to Document Violations:  
Enabling Sex Worker Communities to Document  
Violence Against Them**

***Baseline Evaluation- DMSC***

For Tactical Technologies  
2 February, 2011-02-05

From r e a c h  
Rituu Nanda  
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## **Background of the Project**

The overarching goal of the project is to understand, through action research, how digital techniques can be used to effectively document and report violations against sex workers. In doing so, the project will work with advocacy groups in India (Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee - DMSC) and Cambodia (the Women's Network for Unity - WMU) to enhance their internal communications capabilities. Five to ten innovative micro-projects will build on the existing skills to collect, organize and present data, using a variety of digital tools and techniques to carry out effective advocacy interventions.

## **Objectives of Baseline Study**

The aim of the baseline evaluation was to track and reflect on how DMSC's advocacy processes undergo change in their conceptualization and execution. The findings will help improve program effectiveness for the Atlas project.

Goal: To explore shifts in the way DMSC conducts evidence-based advocacy work using new forms of documentation and technology in a sustainable manner.

Specific objectives include:

1. To explore changes in ways DMSC uses information in its advocacy with specific target audiences
2. To understand how differently DMSC approaches advocacy through the compilation of the atlas.
3. To explore changes in participatory action research skills.

## **Methodology**

While the evaluation was led by agreed-upon evaluation objectives, the focus was on stakeholders' needs for information to enhance program effectiveness and make iterative decisions, related to their interventions, systematically. This participant approach assumed a logic that people engaged in the sex worker atlas should be considered in its evaluation. The evaluators led this participation to ensure participant perspectives were fully included leading to rich descriptive findings.

Participatory Impact Pathways Analysis (PIPA) was used to solve specific problems within the advocacy program at DMSC. PIPA is a practical planning, and monitoring and evaluation approach developed for use with complex projects. PIPA goes beyond the traditional use of logic models and log frames by engaging stakeholders in a structured participatory process, promoting learning and providing a framework for 'action research' on processes of change.

PIPA began with a participatory workshop where stakeholders made their assumptions about how their project would achieve an impact. Participants constructed problem trees, carried out a visioning exercise and drew network maps to help them clarify their 'impact pathways'. These are then articulated in an outcome logic model. The outcomes logic model described the project's medium term objectives in the form of hypotheses: which actors need to change, what are those changes and which strategies are needed to realise these changes.

Focused group discussions and in-depth interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data for the baseline. The questionnaire for FGDs and in-depth interviews were framed by the participants themselves. A one-day analysis workshop was conducted with the evaluation team which collaboratively reviewed transcriptions and notes.

Participants derived outcome targets and milestones which would be regularly revisited and revised as part through the knowledge management tool of Self-assessment framework adopted from Community Life competence.

## Findings of the baseline evaluation

The key evaluation finding shows that advocacy and documentation work of DMSC is largely centred around the Kolkata office. As we move towards interiors of West Bengal the work is weak due to several reasons like funds, skills, training, hands-on support, and low literacy level.

### Advocacy issues

The responses show that DMSC does issue-based advocacy at different levels. The key issues are recognition of Self-regulatory Boards (SRBs), legalization of sex work, violence against sex workers and rights of sex workers.

DMSC constituted Self regulatory Boards (SRBs) in the sex work sites to prevent entry of minor girls and unwilling adult women into sex work, control the exploitative practices in the sector, and regulate the sex trade. However, government sees trafficked women as victims who are in need for rescue. They see anti-trafficking as the work of the police which has refused to recognise the legitimacy of SRBs.

*Earlier whenever a new girl came to the brothel, police and local clubs used to get a commission but now SRB gives recognition to the new girl and they do not get anything. So they are opposed to recognition of SRB. ... When we meet stakeholders for recognition of SRBs they say that Sex workers are illiterate, sex work is immoral and is not recognized as work. Sex workers cannot form a board. Only professionals like doctors, lawyers can form a*

*board. The group said that we want to keep our profession clean; we do not want minors to engage in Sex work.*

DMSC has been demanding decriminalization of sex work involving consenting adults so that sex workers can claim basic human rights and civil liberties. DMSC has been campaigning against certain sections of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (ITPA), 1956 which place sex work in an ambivalent zone between legality and criminality. Participant sex workers stated that sex work exists because of the demand of the society and inspite of that the society refuses to recognise it as any other profession. Another major issue of concern has been violence against Sex workers by local goons, landlords as well as the police.

According to the respondents, Stigma and discrimination in the Kolkata red light areas has reduced. They feel this is because the economy of the area is dependent on Sex work. However, in other areas stigma is high.

*Society refuses to acknowledge that sex work is a profession and is essential for livelihood of Sex workers. This is the root cause of stigma against Sex workers. Even from outside some people or stakeholders claim to understand and support Sex workers but from within they stigma towards continues to exist.*

All participants were aware about advocacy, the issues of concern, and which stakeholders to approach to address specific issues.

*We face a lot of violence and harassment because stakeholders don't think that sex work is like any other work. They still think it is immoral.*

### **Advocacy at different levels**

Dmsc has engaged in advocacy at various levels within Kolkata, most notably the state bank of India and at the national level through the national network of sex workers (NNSW).

Staff placed both at the centre and in the provinces is engaged in advocacy with different stakeholders. These (stakeholders?) include madam, pimp, landlord, police, political leaders, local club members, people living or working around the area where Sex workers operate from, government officials, municipal councillor, hospital authorities, media, Army, colleges state and national government, Parliamentarians and international organisations.

*"We ask them to end the raids on Sex workers. In Ultadanga rate of police raids has gone down by 95%." Shared a SW from Ultadanga*



### **Advocacy with State bank of India**

State Bank had refused to open bank account for sex workers citing the reason that sex work is not recognized as work and sex workers have no documents for identity or residence proof. DMSC met bank officials and after rigorous advocacy with the bank, the bank agreed to open an account for a sex worker if she gets a letter from DMSC certifying that she is a member of DMSC.

DMSC has played a lead role in mobilising CBOs in the country and in formation of National Network of Sex workers. At regional level, DMSC is an active member of Asia-Pacific Network of Sex Workers.

### **Advocacy at national level**

In 2006, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) moved the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2006 in the Lok Sabha. DMSC held consultations with Lawyers' Collective and other organisations around the issue of law and trafficking. This was part of a national debate around repeal/abrogation/change of the ITPA of Govt. of India. On International Women's Day 2006, National Network of Sex Workers (NNSW) conducted a rally in which female, male and trans-gendered sex workers from across the country marched through the city. DMSC played a major role in this rally with the demand to repeal ITPA. Thereafter, with the change of the government the passage of the bill has been delayed.

### **Central vs. district level advocacy capacity**

The baseline delved deeply into relationship of sex workers with different groups of people sex workers are associated with. The degree of advocacy reflects on the improvement in the relationships with various stakeholders. DMSC staff has gradually over the years evolved specific advocacy policies for different stakeholders.

The relationship with the police has improved in and around Kolkata due to rigorous advocacy. Police listen to Sex workers and register their complaints and harassment has reduced. In some cases the police even consults DMSC to verify before responding to some information and conducting a raid in the brothel. However, police harassment, raids and violence is higher in districts where advocacy has not been as strong.

*It's not good nor bad, rather neutral. Lack of proper communication remains... In district-- when government changes, we can't make regular contacts with him since we don't go there. So the relationship isn't able to be cultivated.*

One problem emerged which occurred in both districts and Kolkata level. That is, the problem of politicians' interference. On politicians it was noted that they often make promises to Sex workers to win votes but later do not keep their promise. In private they are willing to acknowledge sex work as profession but loath go in public on rights of sex workers. Instances were cited where politicians have put pressure on police and Municipal councillors for raids in

brothels and street based sex workers. Advocacy with politicians is very limited in the districts. The need for greater advocacy with politicians both at Kolkata and in districts was highlighted in all responses.

The relationship with ministers and legislators at both state and central level has improved as they have become more sensitized on issues of Sex workers. However, they are yet to yield to DMSC's demands on ITPA (at the national level) and recognition of SRBs (at the state level). The municipal councillors are supportive on administrative issues like helping in getting a bed for a sex worker in the hospital, and school admissions but on the policy issues the stalemate continues.

One of the demands of DMSC is that sex workers should be recognised as labourers and allowed to form a trade union. Trade unions have refused to register the sex workers collective as a union because sex work is not recognised as a profession. Therefore, DMSC is trying to build linkages with other marginalised groups like hawkers, truck drivers, fishermen etc in West Bengal.

The relationship with local club members has become cordial with regular meetings by DMSC. DMSC often approaches them for help on incidents of violence and arrests. However, the issue of SRBs continues to cause a strain as madams no longer give local clubs a commission when a new girl comes to the brothel.

*Local clubs get a commission from brothel owners for sex trade whereas flying sex workers do not give any commission to local clubs. Therefore, local clubs are supportive of brothel sex workers. For DMSC all are general sex workers and do not differentiate. This causes a strain between their relations.*

The relationship with madam and pimps has improved over the years. Madams show greater empathy towards Sex workers and realising that they could land into jails due to anti-trafficking are more cooperative towards SRBs. Class 'a' sex workers are more confined to their homes and therefore, DMSC staff has not been able to reach out to them for HIV interventions.

While babus are known for their exploitation, they continue to be an indispensable part of sex workers' life and identity. Sometimes a sex worker has no one other than her babu to fall back on for security or to raise children. An informal collectivization of Babus called Saathi Sangathan to nurture better relationship with sex workers have been set up in areas where Durbar is working, though the membership is yet to be substantial.

*Babus who 'eat on us' live off of our income, beat us... don't use condoms... since I'm your husband, I don't need condom. In Kolkata, we can bring them under the babu sangatan where we counsel them.*

## Challenges in advocacy

The major challenge is the weak advocacy being done in the districts due to lack of skills among district staff, limited trainings and funds. Moreover, the teams in districts are scattered and therefore undertake a lot of travel and do not have time to build rapport with local stakeholders. Most of the team members in district teams are from the community and lack education and have language limitations to engage with key stakeholders. Whenever there is an incident a call for help is sent to the team at the centre, in kolkata. This communication sometimes is delayed and by the time central advocacy team arrives the issue has either snowballed into a bigger issues or the issue has just subsided.

All participants reported stigma and discrimination as a barrier in advocacy at all levels. From getting appointments to discriminator attitude, advocacy is an uphill task for the Sex workers. Lack of education and skills add to the challenges in advocacy.

## Documentation at DMSC

The documentation team in DMSC uses multiple ways of documenting their work but most of the documentation is written and in hard copies. Minutes of meetings, FIRS with police, medical certificates, photographs, video recording, films, signature campaign, IEC material etc are some of the ways in which documentation is recorded. This is used for evidence with stakeholders. Documentation is also used for advocacy, internal publication (Durbar Sangbad), follow up with different stakeholders, evidence for funding agencies, and creating awareness among Sex workers.

### Use of documentation as evidence

Documentary evidence was used when a madam refused to give back the belongings of a SW. DMSC staff met local club members showed them the documented evidence. This was helpful for the ORW (Outreach worker) as she was new to her appointment and the documentation gave her a background on the case.

The documentation is primarily written. Very few community members can read and write and therefore inspite of being present at the site are unable to record the events. Thus, in case of an incident the documentation team has to rush to capture the incident. Moreover, lack of skills in use of technology and limited availability of cameras and tape recorders is a stumbling block in audio-visual documentation.

Documentation is weak in district levels as the teams are over-burdened with work and are not able to document much. Another issue has been communication of whatever has been done to the central office and its dissemination among districts. While DMSC has done comprehensive written documentation, the participants felt the need for a more organised way of filing the documents.

### **Monitoring of work**

Work at DMSC is monitored through weekly, fortnightly and monthly meetings, evaluation meeting after each event, action meetings, emergency meetings, weekly report to Central office and retreat meeting. This helps in review of performance but monitoring of advocacy and documentation is not as regular and consistent.

*Once a month a review meeting of at least three hours is held in Ultadanga where we discuss the program intervention of TI how many STD, ICTC were referred. We reflect and then review it in next month's meeting. Follow up in subsequent meetings is very critical. Minutes and photo and participant signature is done for these meetings.*

### **Recommendations**

*The inputs from FGDs and IDIs brought forth the following recommendations:*

#### **Documentation**

The documentation team needs training in documentation particularly for process documentation, report writing and analysis of data. Basic documentation training will be beneficial to the advocacy team. There is limited technical equipment in the field. Availability of this equipment and training on use of equipment will be very useful especially for community members where illiteracy can be barrier to written documentation. The use of electronic means is also important in sharing the available documentation, as it comprises a speedy and cost effective way of transmitting information to districts, state, national and international audience. This will also give a stimulus to communication with the central office as well as among districts. It is also important that the documentation team knows how to maintain documentation –how to keep it in order and organized, preserve photos and documentation and maintenance of the website. Increasing the staff for documentation and advocacy people will definitely strengthen advocacy in the districts.

#### **Advocacy**

Increase in trainings on advocacy especially in the districts is required to build the capacity of the staff. High quality training with a focus on psychological aspects and body language and digital advocacy is required. Refresher courses for previously trained are also needed. A quarterly review of the trainings to gauge the effectiveness of these trainings will help modify the trainings to the needs of the trainees.

Training on evidence based advocacy that is issue based, focused... using coalitions, etc..

Focus on districts is critical, not just Kolkata-based advocacy.

Reflective practice necessary for so that DMSC staff and community can continue learning and strengthening their program accordingly.

## Conclusion

As evident from various experiences shared DMSC team has been doing effective advocacy in Kolkata, at state, national and international level. Careful advocacy has been employed with sex workers approaching the powerful respectfully but as equals. A central advocacy team is actively engaged in advocacy in and around Kolkata. The team consists of both community and non-community staff and has received several trainings on advocacy. DMSC has been able to get voting ids for its members, and admission of sex workers' children in schools. Strong negotiation skills of sex workers on condoms, relationship with local clubs and madams approaching SRBs for recognition of new girls are some of the achievements of DMSC advocacy work.

*We act like pillars. We help them out. I'm joining communication department. Everyday, wherever I go, I push my communications material to the people.*

We find that DMSC engages in two types of advocacy: reactive advocacy, response to a crisis which needs a quick response. The second one is a long-term effort to find a solution to a problem like objectionable sections of ITPA. District advocacy teams mainly respond when a problem arises or an incident happens.

*Network isn't strong in district so we don't have preventive measure there.*

In Kolkata the advocacy team apart from responding to critical situations, is also engaged in prevention of such situations through building relationship with the relevant stakeholders, holding meetings and sharing data and IEC material. This is a continuous process with all levels of stakeholders.

*As a preventive, we talk to counselors and local panchayat so same violence doesn't get repeated. We request them to look after the sex workers. Children and family rely on sex worker wage. We do this, we tell them, so problem doesn't repeat itself.*

Thus, DMSC is becoming focused about its advocacy and activism. A strategic advocacy plan fed by strong documentation can help the organisation reach its goals.

# **Using Technology to Document Violations: Enabling Sex Worker Communities to Document Violence Against Them in India and Cambodia**

***Baseline Evaluation- Women's Network for Unity (WNU)***

For Tactical Tech  
And  
Womens Network for Unity

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## **Background of the Project**

The overarching goal of the project is to understand, through action research, how digital techniques can be used to effectively document and report violations against sex workers. In doing so, the project will work with advocacy groups in India (Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee - DMSC) and Cambodia (the Women's Network for Unity - WNU) to enhance their internal communications capabilities. Five to ten innovative micro-projects will build on the existing skills to collect, organize and present data, using a variety of digital tools and techniques to carry out effective advocacy interventions. To date, the intervention has not been developed. So the baseline will examine advocacy and documentation practices used by WNU which will help inform the design and demonstration of progress and desired achievements over the period of the project.

### ***Background: Women's Network for Unity (WNU)***

Women's Network for Unity (WNU) is the first independently registered sex workers' collective in Cambodia. It has over 5000 members including sexual minorities such as gay, lesbian and transgender people, who also engage in sex work. The network strives to create safe, health-conscious, community-centred spaces in which sex workers can work in solidarity for their mutual protection and empowerment to fight HIV, violence and discrimination. The organisation's conviction is that sex workers can only exercise their rights when they are empowered and their voices are heard.

Womyn's Agenda for Change was the parent organization (dismantled in June 2009) that WNU operated from and received its funding through. Now, SAC - Social Action for Change - takes on the role of WAC. WNU receives its own funding and has a secretariat with nine elected members. Secretariat members are full time staff with one coordinator who is overall in-charge of programs. The secretariat manages and runs three programs - Advocacy, Organizing and Direct Assistance.

## **Objectives of Baseline**

The aim of the baseline evaluation was to track and reflect on how WNU's advocacy processes undergo change in their conceptualization and execution. The findings will help improve program effectiveness for the Atlas project.

Goal: To explore shifts in the way WNU conducts evidence-based advocacy work using new forms of documentation and technology in a sustainable manner.

Specific objectives include:

1. To explore how differently WNU approaches advocacy
2. To examine how WNU collates and documents strategic information and uses information in its advocacy with specific target audiences
3. To explore changes in participatory action research skills.

## Methodology

While the evaluation was led by agreed-upon evaluation objectives, the focus was on stakeholders' needs for information to enhance program effectiveness and make iterative decisions, related to their interventions, systematically. This participant approach assumed a logic that people engaged in the sex worker atlas should be considered in its evaluation. The evaluators led this participation to ensure participant perspectives were fully included leading to rich descriptive findings.

The evaluation team combined elements from strength-based approach and Participatory Impact Pathways Analysis (PIPA) to engage stakeholders in a structured participatory process, promoting learning and providing a framework for 'action research' on processes of change.

The evaluation began with a participatory workshop where stakeholders made their assumptions about how their project would achieve an impact. Participants were divided into groups which constructed a strengths tree outlining the strengths of WNU particularly in documentation and advocacy. The response from the team was very positive for this exercise.

*"I didn't know we had so many strengths...it has given me confidence that we can achieve so much"*

Thereafter, the teams build their dream for WNU for next three years, a feasible dream using their strengths. Participants reflected on where they wanted to go in next three years and how would they like to do so using their strengths. The team also drew network maps to help them clarify their 'impact pathways'. These were then articulated in an outcome logic model. The outcomes logic model described the project's medium term objectives in the form of hypotheses: which actors need to change, what are those changes and which strategies are needed to realise these changes.

Focused group discussions and in-depth interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data for the baseline. The questionnaire for FGDs and in-depth interviews were framed by the participants themselves. A one-day analysis workshop was conducted with the evaluation team which collaboratively reviewed transcriptions and notes.

Participants derived outcome targets and milestones which would be regularly revisited and revised as part through the knowledge management tool of Self-assessment framework adopted from Community Life competence Process of the Constellation for AIDS Competence. Drafting of self-assessment was done as an exercise and the self-assessment framework specific for the project will be done when the intervention is finalised.

## Findings

Findings of the evaluation show that WNU is engaged in advocacy with its own members as well as with external organisations, such as the government, UN and NGOs and networks. WNU advocacy issues include demand for rights of Sex workers and sexual minorities, discrimination, and violence. This is done through collecting and sharing information, data and case histories and mobilising community members.

While WNU is based in Phnom Penh, its work spans several provinces. The current focus of most WNU activities is the capital, but frequent provincial engagements have built a significant level of familiarity in provinces. However, exorbitant travel costs prevent frequent

interactions with (including hands-on training of) the provincial teams in advocacy as well as documentation. External interactions are undertaken to influence broad international and development policy.

Sex workers have worked on outreach projects to visit other sex workers around Phnom Penh city and some provinces in order to develop their community, to urge them to unite to empower themselves, to educate them about HIV and other diseases, and to create strong solidarity to support each other. WNU staff share information on SW rights for which they have a booklet which is shared with Sex workers community to make them aware of their rights. Workshops are also conducted for Sex workers and other NGOs.

The people forum is used as a platform where sex workers can discuss their problems. WNU has a group of people who use music to disseminate relevant messages, Messenger Band (MB). This garment worker girl band grew from WAC's long engagement with Cambodian garment workers. Since its inception, the band advocates in various campaigns, workshop, public events, at the Drop-in Centres (DICs) of women garment factory workers, at the villages, in traditional festival in the villages through songs and performance on the issues faced by the marginalised group such women workers, sex workers, farmers and HIV positive people. Upon hearing their stories the band gather the information and write songs about these peoples lives, sing back to the people the songs they previously composed about life of people in other previous visits. During field visits, band members accompany WNU staff as part of the learning and capacity building process. They learn about the difficulties sex workers face as well as share back to others through songs and music. Presence of the Messenger Band member in each field visit is very important as it draws the attention of sex workers and gathers them into each small gathering.

### ***Sex worker abuses***

FGDs revealed that after the new anti-trafficking legislation was passed the police raided the brothels and most of the brothels and karaoke bars were shut down. Now sex workers primarily work from streets or some in karaoke bars and massage parlours. The three street-based sex workers who were interviewed spoke about challenges they face on account of the local goons. Local gangs usually leave alone the older sex workers and mainly harass younger sex workers and new sex workers for money and sexual favours

*Earlier too many gangsters were a threat but now we know the area and the police. goons don't trouble us but they don't leave new sex workers.*

Another major issue is gang rapes where clients take the sex workers to far off places and sex workers are subject to gang rapes. The Team leader in this situation takes the affected sex worker to WNU office for photographs and interview before lodging a complaint with the police and the hospital. These incidents are shared by WNU team leader among peer sex workers to caution them about such situations. However, it was seen that the secretariat members are more confident than team leaders in dealing with government officers. Police are familiar with the members of secretariat and listen to them.

*A foreigner invited me to his house. He raped and beat me up but refused to pay me. I decided to seek help from WNU. With WNU staff I approached the foreigner and threatened to file a complaint with the police if the foreigner did not pay for the services. Out of fear of the police he agreed to pay me.*

A sex worker who works in the Building Area,  
Phnom Penh

Though the community members did not seem aware of the details of anti trafficking law but they have seen an increase in police harassment and arrests after the law was passed.

*Government promote condom use and police use condom as evidence to arrest me.*

*We can't wear shorts or have hair colour or make up. If we wear shorts they arrest and increase cost according to kg.*

WNU has also tried to raise the issues faced by transgender as general public and policy makers do not realize that Transgender do sex work and experience abuse, just like female sex workers under Anti trafficking law. They are often of drug use. A big challenge for WNU has been is advocacy with the transgender community members who earlier did not believe when WNU cautioned that they would be subject to police arrests. But later when they experienced this, they started to believe. The findings also brought forth that transgender face abuse but it is much less than that faced by female sex workers

*As a team leader I have difficulty convincing transgender. I informed transgender in target area, but they hardly believe.*

Most of the sex workers shared that they had participated in different WNU activities on drug trial, police abuse, campaigns, and shared their stories in huge gatherings. Most of the large scale events have been held with the support of APNSW, with whom WNU has a strong alliance. Over time, with the passage of the new anti-sex work law, the frequency of such meetings has reduced as funding has dried up. However, it was evident that the sex workers associated with WNU feel strongly about the issues and their accomplishments. They have a have sense of achievement. Some feel brave enough to speak out. However, it was noted during FGDs with community members that it was only two or three members per FGD who spoke out with knowledge, clarity of issues and confidently. Most of these were team leaders. Team leaders enjoy the trust of the community members. There is a strong sense of political commitment as they meet the group more often because the team leader also works along the street. Team leaders educate members about HIV, health, human rights and access to health services.

*I admire my team leader who has helped me in difficult times when the gangster used to trouble me.*

### ***Kinds of advocacy initiatives***

WNU has engaged in limited amount of local advocacy. For example, it has negotiated with several state hospitals and some NGO clinics in Phnom Penh to enable sex workers to receive free health care and ART, including free food when hospitalized. WNU has issued its members with cards to help them access the services.

*We want them to access all health care, not just STIS. Still when health care providers (HCPs) know we are sex workers, they discriminate. We Demand free health care for sex workers so we can perform work peacefully, without violence*

Thus, the discussion showed that WNU does limited advocacy work in the field with a focus on raising awareness among the community members on some health issues.

It appears that most of the advocacy WNU engages in has been vigorous at the national and international levels. WAC seeks to influence national policy, primarily through engagement



with government ministries including the Cambodian Parliament and the Ministry of Women's Affairs. It was successful in struggle to stop a Tenofovir trial, in which sex workers' consent had not been garnered.

WNU has organised very public and high level events to draw attention of the government to the issues of Sex workers. advocacy tactics used, included MTV event, films, use of religious events, and peaceful marches. Government restrictions on assembly and movement of large group of people are a stumbling block in WNU's advocacy campaigns. WNU devised an innovative way of attracting attention as a gathering of more than 200 people for a rally needs permission from the Ministry. Buddhist style solidarity ceremonies have brought extensive visibility to sex worker issues.

*Usually monks don't touch our issue. But in this case, the monks spoke in public, saying sex workers are humans and no one is better than the other- karma and reborn in poor situation, but are the same.*

About 80% of participants spoke about media events and demonstrations but a few spoke of crisis intervention, health care and welfare of the children. WNU has put its efforts on discrimination, impact of anti-trafficking law as an enabling environment and right to work are a prerequisite for addressing other issues like education for children. Therefore so much focus has been on right to work.

New law aimed at eliminating sexual exploitation and trafficking of women and girls came into force in Cambodia in early 2008. The law makes almost all aspects of buying and selling sex illegal, including most forms of association with sex workers. After the anti-trafficking law was passed, police cracked down on brothels, prompting many sex workers to move to karaoke bars and massage parlours.

Sex workers and human rights organisations have published evidence of human rights abuses including rape, violence and unlawful detention by police, prison guards and NGOs and deaths in custody. Interview findings showed that closing the sex industry has displaced women and pushed them into situations in which they and their families are poorer and more vulnerable. WNU has led an impressive campaign against the law. WNU held an 'Open Day of Action' which was attended by a large number of sex workers and general public, media and representatives of government, NGOs, UN agencies and the private corporations.

Cambodia has relatively recently re-integrated into the world economy. The country is highly dependent on international aid and development agencies. USAID is one of the major donors in Cambodia. WNU is working against huge structural issues, restrictive laws and policies which limit basic civil rights and freedom. Therefore, instead of focusing on simple issues like resources and trainings, WNU is dealing with complex structural issues and the forces of globalization. WNU sees these issues as integral to sex worker rights issues. However, they often struggle against such issues in isolation and therefore find it difficult to manage vast social concerns on their own.

WNU has found itself being increasingly isolated from other groups because of the Bush-era PEPFAR agenda. (President's Emergency Plan for Aids - a US funding plan that mandates that groups not 'supporting' the rehabilitation of sex workers or working for the abolition of sex work or promoting abortion cannot be eligible for HIV funding). In 2003, when this policy came into effect NGOs that received funding from the US government were obligated to sign agreements declaring that their activities did not involve support to prostitution and sex trafficking. Not surprisingly, WNU refused to change its mission and philosophy of empowering sex workers and did not sign the policy, unlike most of the existing NGOs receiving HIV funds in Cambodia. As a result, WNU felt discarded by several NGOs that

received US funding. Initially (in the 1990s) WNU's work on sex worker empowerment was funded by USAID through Family Health International. Thus, not only did WNU lose USAID funding, but they also became isolated from organisations such as FHI and KHANA (formerly HIV Alliance), which according to WNU, shifted focus from sex workers' rights to a biomedical and health focus.

Thus, many sex workers who have enlisted with WNU believe that they were used by NGOs as pawns to attract funding. This confirmed, in their view, that NGOs believed that sex workers are vectors of disease and had no rights. Furthermore, it was clear to them that the only people that could represent sex workers adequately were sex workers themselves because NGOs proved to be unreliable and changed their approaches according to donor demands.

However, some NGOs who are not dependent on US funding like Cambodia Prostitution Union support SW rights but do not have funds to undertake any activity. Tiny toons funded by Global Fund for children is a partner of WNU and provides hip hop training and English education to children of Sex Workers.

HIV/AIDS Coordinating Committee (HACC) is a HIV/AIDS NGOs network for an effective response to the HIV in Cambodia. WNU has chosen not to be a formal member of HACC but is a close partner of HACC. WNU attends HACC meetings on issues of interest, participates in discussions, and has done joint press releases and a video documentary with HACC.

Action AID Cambodia has been a strong ally of WNU. Action AID provides funds and technical support to WNU. WNU has organised joint events with Action AID including one on a global sex worker network and advocacy activities. Action AID formed a network CWCC (Cambodian Women Crisis Centre) of NGOs who work on anti-trafficking. Action AID links up WNU to CWCC. WNU informs CWCC if there is a trafficking and CWCC works with police to identify the real victim.

- WNU's relationship with police has become strained after passing of Anti-trafficking law. The anti-trafficking law has given powers to police resulting in increased harassment of sex workers

The 100% Condom Use Policy (CUP) - created to "protect" sex workers and curb HIV - is used by local police as an instrument to harass, persecute, and criminalize sex workers. Women are arrested for carrying condoms, which are then used as evidence of sex work. However, this has not deterred the sex workers to use condoms. Most of those interviewed shared that they always insist on condom use and the clients usually carry condoms. MSM and Transgender sex workers are also arrested under the law.

*Police when find condoms with us, it uses to arrest us, Now I carry condoms in my bra to hide. Earlier guest house owner used to put condoms in the guest house but now does not put as he fears arrest by police and closure of guest house.*

Under the Anti trafficking Law WNU has registered itself as an NGO that can "take" arrested sex workers for "rehabilitation". WNU in its mission says that it does not rehabilitate or retrain women. WNU believes in human rights and therefore lets the woman decide her choice if she wants to continue sex trade or wants to rehabilitate. What it does then, is to release its arrested members. This act of subversion demonstrates how WNU uses the law by undermining it to its own end. WNU has set up a hotline for reporting of incidents and it has been well received. It also allows members to communicate information about a variety of other issues. There is often conflict and tension between police, social affairs ministry, and

NGOs particularly with WNU, as the police feel they're releasing women too fast without evidence of enough "rehabilitation". Several stories were shared by Sex workers of being sent to "rehabilitation" centres and subjected to sexual violence and beatings, with little access to health care or food and were not allowed to meet their families.

Not surprisingly, WNU's relationships with police, ministries of social affairs and women, and NGOs are often apprehensive and sometimes tense. WNU members feel this demonstrates that they are acting in accordance with a rights agenda since resistance must be overt and clear.

WNU continues to raise the issue of anti-trafficking law in meetings with the national HIV agency, ministries, NGOs, police that the AT law has implications for women's health and HIV prevention. Raids and arrests under the law have forced sex workers to go underground. It has become difficult to reach out to sex workers for condoms, HIV prevention, care and treatment.

WNU's relationship with Ministry of women's affair was cordial but there have been changes since the law. The law opposes sex work which is under the direction of the ministry. Consequently, the new people who work there oppose sex worker rights. According to WNU respondents, Sex workers are judged as 'bad girls', and are believed to be responsible for the deterioration of Khmer society's morality. Ministry of labour has a similar view and according to WNU respondents, accuses WNU of "converting the city into condom city" with their insistence on condom use. Thus, the activist stance of WNU, of public criticism of government policies is sometimes seen as propaganda directed against the government. They often feel they are in a no-win situation.

WNU is very active in the international sex worker rights arena and has participated in World social forum in Kenya, International AIDS conference in Toronto as well as in Vienna. WNU's continuing strong and supportive partnership with APNSW has included participation in regional workshops, and campaigns for exchange of experiences and information, enhance their advocacy activities, development of a common strategic plan, and the production of video to increase public awareness.

While there has been some tension on account of the anti-trafficking law but on welfare issues of children of sex workers the local government authorities have acknowledged the work of WNU and provided support. WNU undertakes the following activities for the children of sex workers:

- Educational sessions in Drop-In Centres where children can learn Khmer and English and reading, writing and maths
- Hip-hop and other dance classes organized by Tiny toons
- Support school-going children for admission

## ***Challenges***

WNU faces several challenges in its advocacy work from the grass roots to the top most level of the central government. Given the new law, the government does not openly support sex workers and their rights which has been the main focus of WNU. Not surprisingly, police discrimination has risen. This ranges from bad language with sex workers and transgender to outright refusal of access to health services and support of sex workers' voices.

WNU stands isolated in their struggle, not only from lack of government support. NGOs have distanced themselves from WNU. According to WNU leaders, NGOs which support anti-trafficking law ignore community issues and NGO which work on health ignore community rights. A large number of interviews spoke of stigma from NGOs. WNU members are discouraged often saying that "what can a group of Sex workers do".

For WNU, it is becoming increasingly difficult to mobilise community members, given the political economy of HIV development. Compared to other NGOs, for example, WNU provides low per diem rates for participants when they participate at events and meetings. It is therefore difficult to get people to participate in the events on the behalf of WNU. Community people are not aware of the full ramifications of the anti-trafficking law and therefore do not join in any activities, as they fear arrest. As team leaders get a small stipend from WNU, they are forced to take up extra jobs and can give only limited time to WNU work. Moreover, team leaders have can mobilise community members during the morning as they relatively more time in the morning. However as most of the community members work during the night they tend to sleep during the day. Therefore, the team leaders can reach out to limited community members.

*We cannot take all members for treatment as they have to visit the hospital in the morning but most of them sleep till late in the mornings. Have to keep mobilising the community again as they are engaged in their work.*

Some community members live in far flung areas and team leaders have limited money and time to visit everyone. It is difficult to connect with community members because they constantly move from one area to another in search of clients. Government promotes young women and does not provide funds for building skills of older sex workers.

Due to the reduction in overall funding the training of provincial WNU team leaders on advocacy and documentation has taken a back seat. As a result the feedback from the provinces has got severely affected. The provincial members who earlier met every month in Phnom Penh now meet only every quarter. Therefore, learning and sharing between the provinces has got considerably reduced.

## ***Documentation***

In the field, the team leader is responsible for documentation and sends a weekly report to WNU. Often the Team leaders are not formerly educated (generally with a x grade education and low literacy) and take someone's help in compiling the reports. In case of an incident the team leader reports to WNU, gets a picture of the victim and written report from WNU and submits it to the police. Besides this the team leader also maintains a member database for referrals, police case and other issues. This is not an easy task as members change their name very often.

Reports and case studies are the two main types of documentation undertaken by WNU secretariat. Members working in and around Phnom Penh meet every month and members from different provinces come together for quarterly meetings. The minutes of all these meetings are recorded and documented. Provincial staff sends monthly reports from the field to WNU office in Phnom Penh. The provincial reports are compiled by WNU staff in the capital to share with the donors. The other type of documentation which is done is through photographs. Pictures from newspapers on arrests and incidents related to WNU are carefully filed. WNU staff members attempt to use phone or camera to capture photographs of abuses and violence. However, it was found that only half among seven staff can do it because others do not have camera with phone or are not trained on taking photographs. But it was noted that when a woman who has faced physical abuse reports to WNU, it is a regular practice of WNU to take photographs of the victim before putting up a complaint in the police. A street based worker shared that after she was raped by a group of men, she approached WNU, which took her photographs and which were used as evidence by the police. The WNU staff member said

*We have to be careful in clicking photographs not reveal their identity.*

Among the community members, photo documentation was not found during focused group discussions. Most Sex workers do not carry their cell phones when they go with their clients as they fear that it might be snatched. Also sex workers usually have basic cell phones which do not have cameras to take photographs.

*We believe that we must engage with target group, make them understand why we do documentation and so that motivate them so can join in advocacy.*

Case studies and testimonies are used in advocacy with parliamentarians and government departments and used as evidence in filing police complaints. WNU has held exhibition of photographs a few times. Video recording of events is sometimes done which is later shown both to the community at local level and to friends and networks at international level. WNU has made several films on the impact of anti-trafficking law. This is done through interviews with victims, issues are mostly violence and rapes and harassment mostly from target areas. A film for advocacy against anti-trafficking was produced in conjunction with APNSW. Interviews with community members are recorded on audio tape and shared with stakeholders.

WNU shared several challenges in documentation. One of the main challenges cited by the WNU team was that it conducts interviews and case studies without questionnaires. There is no questionnaire to conduct interviews and the team does not know how to develop questions. The team noted that they need questionnaires as it would help them flesh out key information for the case studies. Without a questionnaire, when they take interviews they do get a lot of data but are not able to focus and sometimes tend to miss out on relevant data and later find it very difficult to analyse and compile a crisp case study. Thus, analysing data and compilation of case studies is an area which the team is looking for capacity building. Very few team members know English. The reports received from the provinces are in Khmer and the staff in Phnom Penh which compiles these reports and even translates them in English if the report has to go to the donor.

Another challenge WNU faces is ways to file the documents and keep them secure. Also, as case studies and reports are hand written and kept in folders and if particular information is required it is not easy to find. Low literacy rate among sex workers is a huge challenge to collate stories and experiences from the field. A few team leaders said that they took help from family members to compile their field reports.



## Recommendations

For strengthening documentation skills there is a need to build capacity of WNU staff on how to collect and analyse the information and how to save it in soft copy and file it so that information can be retrieved easily. Another need which came up strongly was the requirement for developing questionnaires for interviews.

A need was felt for other forms of documentation, outside the written form. For example, more video documentaries and case studies which can strengthen advocacy with the stakeholders. Publications and write-ups in newspapers have been limited and more can be done in this area. Quality of documentation can be improved with need for evidence based documentation. WNU can explore ways of collaborating with other organisations like UNAIDS to produce quality publications.

The inputs from team leaders in the field feed into the documents compiled by WNU secretariat. Therefore, it is crucial to build capacity of team leaders in documentation keeping in mind that a large number of them cannot read or write. Group of sex workers can be formed which know how to read and write. Team leaders can take support from these help groups in documentation. As the team leaders are few and have huge responsibility, recruitment of more team leaders can help reduce the workload.

WNU could consider developing advocacy strategies including evidence, based on selected issues that are prioritized by them and other sex work collectives. These should include advocacy messages, and messengers along with appropriate tactics and a strong M&E component. A proper advocacy strategy could be devised which identifies actors to be approached, ways to approach and a follow up plan to track the progress. WNU has had a reputation of being an articulate and demanding group; particularly seen in its responses to the Tenofovir trials and in response to the Anti Trafficking Law. WNU might consider reviewing its advocacy strategy as dealing with the government in a variety of manners. While challenging the government (with direct action) is the appropriate tactic to use in many cases, sometimes working along side government may be another strategy to take in other instances. WNU can identify channels which can influence policy makers and approach and ally with them to address shared concerns. This can be done through lobbying with different technical advisory groups which advise the government and consist of civil society members, and donors. Civil society members might include human rights and social justice groups, not those limited to sex worker collectives which do not always have the same political agenda.

WNU is dealing with huge structural issues and feels isolated by most NGOs. WNU might want to work in coalition with sex worker groups on certain shared concerns. However, on the more rights oriented concerns, WNU might consider building coalitions with other human rights groups such as Action Aid among others to take a proactive role in reaching. The strength of sex workers is in their numbers but a large number has gone underground after the Anti-trafficking law. This represents its most stringent barrier. Hence, confederation of networks, outside of the HIV and sex work arena may be the most productive way forward since they can provide a forum to hold a dialogue with number of partners. UNAIDS has demonstrated much interest and support and could facilitate building the network or federation of organisations working on issues of sex workers.

It was noted that confidence levels among the community and staff could be built as they feel isolated in their campaign for sex worker rights. This would also mean mentoring and capacity building of selected staff from WNU who can sharpen their advocacy skills to become professional advocates and effectively take up the rights of sex workers. Community

systems strengthening is extremely critical for which Community Life competence approach and SALT techniques offered by the Constellation (<http://www.communitylifecompetence.org/en/>) can mobilise the community to apply its strengths to address issues of concern.

In order to shape content dialogue with government, for e.g. trafficking and sexual exploitation, there is a need to build the capacity for the professional approach to lobby with the policy maker and relevant stakeholders. In this, WNU can seek technical support from UN agencies in building advocacy skills, identifying entry points and interact with the stakeholders. , WNU can effectively use available studies for advocacy. Several existing studies are being underutilized such as Cambodian Alliance for Combating HIV/AIDS (CACHA) study. This study should be well versed among WNU constituents and used with the media and a variety of government fora.

Another group of stakeholders who need regular sensitization on issues of sex workers are the police personnel. Most of the advocacy so far with the police is done after the incidents have occurred. WNU can focus its advocacy more on prevention of such incidents. FGDs demonstrated that while secretariat staff has confidence to do advocacy but a large number of community members lack confidence and need training in effective speaking. Team leaders expressed the need for training in communication skills which would help them better articulation in the meetings with stakeholders like police and to share testimonies in huge rallies.

*I want to learn different issues, like CUP. I want to learn how to prepare and understand what's going on in meeting...I want to know how to speak to higher officer.*

Another important need that came up was to develop a mechanism to monitor and evaluate the outcomes of advocacy.

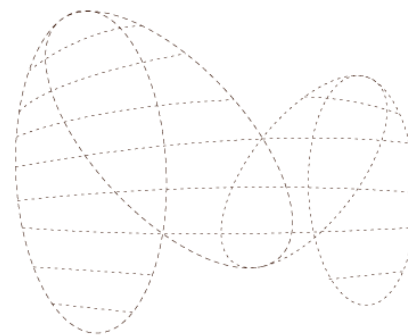
## Conclusion

WNU is a unique example of a grassroots organization created by sex workers to achieve their aims. Their strong solidarity and mutual support for each other has proven that people power is effective in overcoming problems. Their victory against forces such as powerful organizations, drug companies and large donors is an example of the power that social groups can exercise when united in advocating for their rights. An example of this power was manifested when WNU managed to halt a drug trial in 2004. WNU's broad base of policy and high level interactions ensures that the voices and concerns of these women are heard at many different levels and appropriate policy recommendations and actions can be implemented.

Thus, WNU is a small organisation with huge mandate and is isolated with not too many allies willing to take the challenges it wants to take up. It needs to build a network of like minded organisations, beyond sex workers and HIV allies, which can collectively take up the issues and rights of sex workers and others facing discrimination at the hand of the state in Cambodia. It needs to hone and refine skills to compile updated data and evidence-based strategic information that can stand scrutiny of stakeholders.



# Appendix 5



## **Discussion Document: “An Atlas of Sex Work”**

May, 2010

This document is Tactical Tech's proposal to Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC) for activities to carry out in the IDRC PAN Asia Networking Program funded research project «Using Technology to Document Violations: Enabling Sex Worker Communities to Document Violence Against Them in India and Cambodia».

In it we outline an idea called *An Atlas of Sex Work*. This is an organising concept for between 5 to 10 short micro-projects on different themes to be agreed upon. For example these could focus on physical violence, commercial property development, the economics of sex work or the conduct of the police. The micro-projects aim to help sex worker communities affiliated with DMSC document different dimensions of the mistreatment they experience, present information in innovative formats and in doing so, strengthen their advocacy initiatives for sex worker rights. The micro-projects will build on DMSC's existing skills and expose staff and the community to a mix of different approaches to collecting, organising and presenting data, as well as different digital tools and techniques for doing this.

The *Atlas* as we imagine it is modular in nature. This means that there is the opportunity to try out different approaches to documentation and evaluate what works and what doesn't. From this, DMSC should be able to identify practices and techniques that might have organisational and community-wide benefits that could later be institutionalised. Over time, the outputs of each micro-project will build into the *Atlas*, and there is the potential to invite other sex worker advocacy groups to participate and contribute their own parts of the *Atlas*.

The proposal to create *An Atlas of Sex Work* is based on the impressions of Tactical Tech's project team gained following the needs assessment work done with DMSC in Calcutta in March 2010. The ideas described here are for discussion and represent only *one* direction that Tactical Tech and DMSC's collaboration could take. We are greatly looking forward to DMSC's comments and feedback on the *Atlas*.

## What is «An Atlas of Sex Work»?

An *Atlas of Sex Work* is an organising concept for package of activities and publications that would contextually and visually explore the experience of the sex workers who have formed DMSC. It is intended to be a *subjective atlas* about sex work in West Bengal, with a broad focus on the many ways sex workers are mistreated and become victims of violence and stigma.

The term “atlas” sounds unusual in this context, as it is commonly associated with geography and cartographic mapping. The atlas we describe here could certainly include these, but it would go beyond them to include other ways of visually imparting information about issues: info-graphics, pictures and illustrations. It would hopefully complement DMSC's advocacy in this area, and the process of creating the atlas would strengthen DMSC's technical capacity to use digital documentation techniques, and to make effective use of information about mistreatment.

The *Atlas* would be created from five or more micro-projects that explore particular themes or issue areas that DMSC is engaged with. They would each present stories, numbers and imagery about that theme in visually compelling and engaging ways. These would represent framed messages that support DMSC's advocacy aims.

The outputs of each project — whether in print, digital or other media - would give DMSC's advocates tools and tactics that can be used to strengthen their work. These outputs could be released as they are completed, so as to generate tangible results and to enable us to learn and adjust as we go along.

Some of the inspirations for the *Atlas* are outlined in the annex to this document, which also contains some of the illustrations that have inspired the micro-projects. We are also sending to you by mail two of the publications that have inspired us: *Subjective Atlas of Palestine*, and *An Atlas of Radical Cartography*. They will arrive at DMSC shortly.

## Why «An Atlas of Sex Work»?

Tactical Tech's needs assessment work with DMSC in Calcutta in March 2010 identified a good opportunity to use information creatively to challenge entrenched ideas about sex work in India as an approach to reducing violence.

During the needs assessment work we were able to spend time talking to many different DMSC staff and community members about their work and aspirations. We learned about groups of persons that DMSC identifies as being responsible for systematic violence against sex workers. Many discussions, and a two day workshop with DMSC helped us understand some of the information processes and documentation methods that are used by the organisation and community, and the different ways that information is shared and made public. Through the assessment, we gained many impressions about DMSC's current documentation and advocacy processes, but the following have influenced us most strongly:

• *Advocacy about sex workers' rights can be broadened:* Campaigns around sex worker rights in India tend to be highly specific, local, and reactive to situations of violation or official inaction. Sex workers also make an appearance in campaigns on HIV prevention education. Advocacy for rights does not emphasise the reality of sex workers' lives; that they are in fact often poor, working class, impoverished women further marginalized on the basis of caste or religion is obscured. The moral context, however, tends to be over-emphasised. The approach we take should be to paint a more holistic picture of sex workers' lives, revealing the wide social, political and economic forces that shape the reality and perceptions of sex work.

- *DMSC is responsive and dynamic:* much of DMSC's work is focussed on a wide range of local needs and problems across West Bengal. The variety of threats and opportunities, and the need to react quickly, may call for a variety of different advocacy approaches and tactics. The themes addressed, the techniques used and skills developed through the collaboration between Tactical Tech and DMSC should reflect this variety.
- *DMSC innovates with its community, but carefully:* after deep and widespread consultation with its members, DMSC introduced major innovations that provide useful services and support to sex worker communities. These include the new Self-Regulatory Boards (SRBs), which introduce a more inclusive form of governance to local DMSC chapters, and the provision of banking services through the *Usha* Cooperative, helping sex workers save and borrow money safely, eliminating the control of money lenders charging exorbitant interest rates. Through participation and consultation, DMSC makes changes that it is certain would be useful – changes to how it makes use of information should be treated with the same care. Rather than suggesting one particular solution, the collaboration with Tactical Tech should explore different approaches with the intention of identifying what techniques emerge as having community-wide and organisation-wide benefits.
- *DMSC has a wide range of talents:* DMSC has many different, complimentary capacities which include research, legal, advocacy, communications, publications, visual media, mobilisation and technical support. DMSC's staff, including those recruited for this project, are a primary asset for this project. Rather than technical investment, they should be central to the project. The collaboration should also harness the creativity of DMSC's staff to create opportunities to use these capacities to carry out vibrant advocacy, and create new and interesting products. By including a variety of projects and a range of different approaches and outputs, the *Atlas of Sex Work* would help do this.
- *To DMSC, violence is a broad concept:* our discussions with DMSC's staff and community revealed a wide variety of understandings about the definition of “violence” and “rights”. These ranged from physical violence at the individual level to larger scale problems like predatory high-interest money lending and the privatisation and redevelopment of brothel areas. The spirit of this collaboration should be to respect these understandings held by the community, and develop creative activities that work directly with their

concerns.

- *DMSC's documentation isn't standardised, but it's not disorganised either:* DMSC branch offices have a huge amount of documentation about violence, mistreatment and other issues. This information is written out by hand into paper files or journals, and then secured in metal boxes. DMSC has many reasons for keeping this information, and a variety of different uses for it. Getting at this information is best done through the local branch staff, who can recall the details and themes of particular cases, and can find documentation about them relatively quickly. So, this information is organised, but not systematically or in a standardised way. However, we cannot say at this point whether systematising part or all of DMSC's documentation is practical, or if it will yield any benefit in terms of its advocacy. For the purposes of short projects on a particular theme (for example, cases of extortion), it should be possible to gather the information required through asking local branches to provide it, rather than making them to change how they record information.
- *DMSC is pragmatic in its use of technology:* many staff and community members have mobile phones. These are the most widely used technology at DMSC, and are firmly integrated into the organisation's alert, response and community mobilisation activities. Desktop computers are entering some medical clinics, which are using them to process medical information for reporting on DMSC's public health programmes. Computers are not, however, used to capture and store information about mistreatment. Internet connections are being extended to many branches, but their availability is not uniform throughout West Bengal. This collaboration should look to continue this pragmatic use of technology, rather than pin its success on a extending computers to all branches, erratic connectivity, or the creation of uniform levels of computer literacy.

These impressions, read alongside Tactical Tech's own core strengths and capacities, led us to think of an Atlas of Sex Work as a useful framework for collaboration.

## **What could be in an Atlas of Sex Work?**

Here are five initial themes and ideas that could be turned into the micro-projects that would build up into the *Atlas*. The micro-projects aim to be creative responses to real challenges that DMSC has identified, and blend different approaches to collecting, managing and presenting information that will help DMSC build its skills.

The physical outputs from all the projects would be print publications or digital resources. They would all have internal audiences of sex workers communities, so the resources could be spread through internal communications channels such as *Durbar Samvaad*, or the cultural unit. However, there would also be specific external audiences, such as law enforcement organisations. So, if DMSC has an information resource such as an info-graphic, we would have to think about how DMSC's activists could use it in their existing advocacy with external groups.

Where something specific has inspired us, we have included links to the resource on the Internet. Some of the illustrations are included in this document's Annexes, and we have also posted some publications to DMSC.

## **1. Who victimises Sex Workers?**

- Outline: DMSC already collects a large amount of information concerning incidents of violence – a look through the incident registers in clinics, and the documentation in the research department shows this. The key here is to find an engaging way of visualising this evidence to tell a story, showing the scale and multi-dimensional nature of mistreatment. Laying out the range of actors and incidents could be very powerful, allowing exploration of a new way of presenting the issue and a different form of engagement with the issue for intended audiences.
- Suggested Advocacy Objective: Reveal the range and often unacknowledged actors and forces responsible for mistreatment, and their impact.
- Potential Audience: General public; law enforcement and legal apparatus; law-makers.
- Possible Outputs: A single or set of info-graphics. Our inspiration for this idea was a simple but surprising info-graphic showing dangerous children's products that were recalled in 2009-2010 in the United States (see Annex).<sup>1</sup>

## **2. Commercial development in red-light areas in West Bengal**

- Outline: Mapping commercial developments in brothel areas could help show the impact on sex workers of West Bengal's recent efforts to improve its image and prospects by inviting multinational and local corporate interests to set up industries in the city and state. This mini-project could try to source existing data from commercial land registries and property values in brothel areas using Right to Information laws, or even mobilise branches to collect the information.
- Suggested Advocacy Objective: Show that violations against sex workers may be related to commercial interests; drawing parallels between sex workers and other marginalized communities like the rural poor, tribals, farmers, who have faced similar forms of coercion and violence helps move the focus away from moral stigma around sex work and emphasizes sex workers' poverty and social marginalization.
- Potential Audiences: Consumer and citizens' rights watchdog groups; civil society; media; Right to Information (RTI) activists.
- Possible Outputs: A dataset about property values; a digital map showing commercial values and schemes developing near brothel areas; an info-graphic relating commercial developments to the well-being of sex workers.

## **3. A day in the neighborhood (Sonagachi)**

- Outline: A 24 hour timeline that would explore the differences between sex workers and their families and the wider communities they live in. What are the differences in terms of opportunities, spending on essential commodities, exposure to risks, and relationships with government, public

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<sup>1</sup> "Recalled Baby Products, 2009-2010", <http://www.hugamonkey.com/files/recalled-baby-products.jpg>

and social institutions and other groups in societies? The project would draw on existing documentation at DMSC and available research about the habits and characteristics of sex workers, and exclusion and stigmatisation.

- Suggested Advocacy Objective: Address stigmatization of sex workers by depicting how similar their concerns, needs and lives are to other people of a similar class and position in society; inspire empathy for how sex workers and their families are discriminated against.
- Potential Audiences: General public; other social justice movements working on access to services, resources and opportunities for the urban and rural poor.
- Possible Outputs: A play script, or participatory performance piece, mixed with some visual materials that can be used to demonstrate comparisons; an illustrated form of this could later be worked out to be included in the *Atlas*.

#### **4. Mapping impact of sex work economies**

- Outline: There may be existing research data about the value, contribution and impact of sex work to local economies. Sex workers also provide support to a number of smaller (and not so small) entrepreneurs, industries and economies. Which businesses benefit from having sex workers operate around them? As a one-off campaign event we could consider looking at how to gather data about the rate and flow of client turnover in brothel areas, sex workers' spending, and the velocity of money in brothel areas, and create some kind of visual expression of economic life.
- Suggested Advocacy Objective: Sex work is work! Depict the economic impact of sex work and sex workers on local businesses and industries.
- Potential Audiences: Labour rights movements, organizations and bodies.
- Possible Outputs: A presentation about economic life in brothel areas, a community-developed dataset showing a day's turnover, perhaps some interactive materials visualising this. We were partly inspired by a recent real-time visualisation of the millions of New York taxi-cab pick ups in a week in lower Manhattan, which you can see online here (see Annex).<sup>2</sup> Recognising that this sort of data and its representation could potentially be subverted by hostile elements of the local society, we would consider framing this sensitively and carefully.

#### **5. Sex Worker Sous-veillance of the Police**

- Outline: Reward the police for good behaviour. DMSC aims to ensure that its relationship with the police in red-light areas does not slide back towards systematic violence. Mobile technology enables a technique called "sous-veillance" - or "surveillance from below". The idea is to work with DMSC members to collect data, discretely, on every law enforcement official working in areas where DMSC works. This could be blended with data about the police budgeting, or perceived quality and responsiveness of law enforcement in different areas, such as filing of First Information Reports (FIRs), time taken to conduct investigations in different kinds of cases, and so on. Advocacy wise, this would provide a new layer of hard information for DMSC's first responders in dealing with the police, also providing an

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2 "Tracking Taxi Flow Across the City", <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/04/02/nyregion/taxi-map.html?ref=nyregion>



- opportunity to praise good practice by law enforcement.
- Suggested Advocacy Objective: Support and reward good practice by police officials, highlight and condemn police corruption and violence by showing that it is unnecessary, and that other police officials are more effective.
- Potential Audiences: Civil society; citizens' rights watchdog bodies; media; law-makers
- Possible Outputs: A full dataset of police working in red-light districts, some performance statistics for each police group or station. An annual awards ceremony event rewarding good practice, shaming the bad. This idea has two inspirations that could shape the outputs. Firstly the work of an activist called "TarSniper" in covertly recording traffic police soliciting bribes from drivers in Morocco.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, official and non-official efforts in the UK to make public information about the performance of the police, and enable communities to participate in this effort (See Annex).<sup>4</sup>

To be clear: these are first ideas, that can certainly be expanded, bettered or rejected through discussion with DMSC. We have developed other similar ideas as well, so this could be an iterative work-in-progress in collaboration with DMSC's programme staff and community. We look forward to hearing DMSC's ideas for more or different micro-projects, or thoughts about the ones we have suggested; the only restriction within this idea is that the projects would need to have interesting visual outputs that could be included in the *Atlas*.

## How would An Atlas of Sex Work be created?

The *Atlas* would be created through collaboration. DMSC has terrific capacity in the areas of advocacy, mobilisation, research, artistic direction, and in the design and production of publications. This is coupled with huge grassroots access. Tactical Tech can offer help with conceptualising ideas, designing projects, process facilitation, technical expertise and training with a range of new and different approaches to working with information.

The *Atlas* approach is *modular* and *iterative*. Each micro-project is centred on a specific theme, and short in duration, for example some may be done in as little as 6 weeks, others may take a few months depending on any systems or training that would need building in to the process. Each project isn't a huge cost in time, resource and organisational upheaval for DMSC. The idea is to learn what works and improve as we go along, allowing us see what approaches could be institutionalised by DMSC at a later date. This complements the action research component of the project, which emphasizes a process of ongoing reflection by participants in this collaboration. We are also proposing to move away from documentation methodologies that are centred on creating big database infrastructures. The weaknesses of infrastructural approaches is that they are overly technical, and the collection of information can easily be disconnected from its use, becoming of little practical value to the diversity of advocacy needs DMSC has.

At the start of each micro-project, Tactical Tech would work collaboratively with DMSC to think through the project. This would include:

<sup>3</sup> "TarSniper's Channel", <http://www.youtube.com/user/TarSniper>

<sup>4</sup> "Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies - MyPolice", <http://www.mypolice.org.uk/> and the unofficial, startup police feedback initiative "myPolice", <http://www.mypolice.org/>

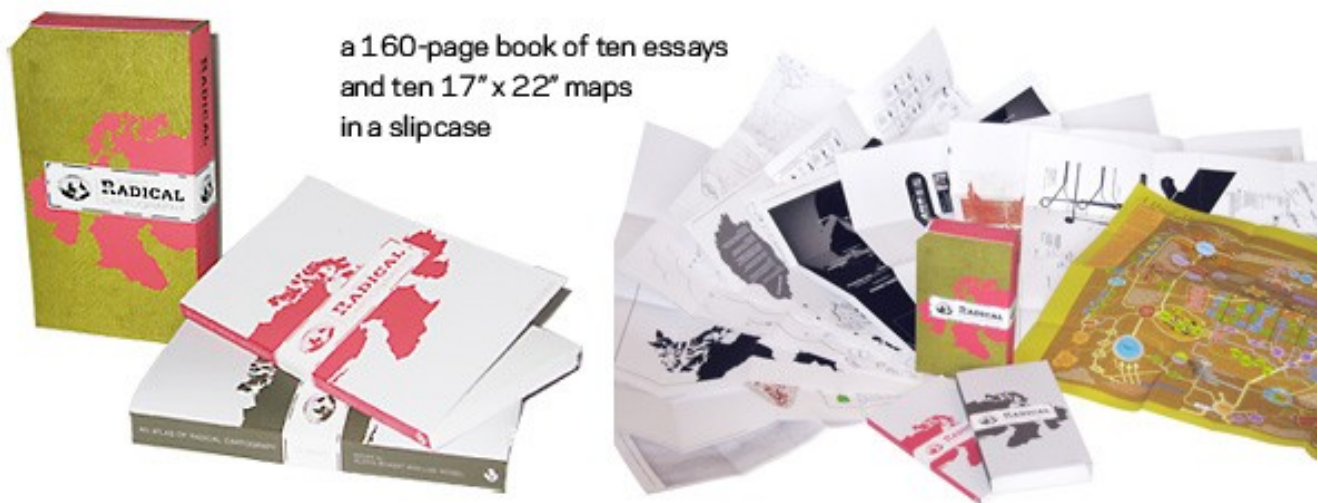
- Explaining the project and its relevance to DMSC's community and policy concerns.
- Identifying the project's aims and objectives and the opportunities for advocacy it could present; and further developing and rethinking aspects of the project along with the project team to fit DMSC's needs
- Finding who could be involved in the project from DMSC (including from the community).
- The type of information to be collected, how to collect it, possible sources of information without and outside DMSC, and methods of presentation.
- Identifying relevant digital techniques, technical and training requirements.
- Identifying, sourcing and engaging specialised external support as required.
- Assisting with project management, including the development of timelines and resource allocation.

DMSC would then implement the project, with the ongoing support of Tactical Tech. As each project came to an end, Tactical Tech and DMSC would repeat the process. Together, we would look at what worked and what didn't, what DMSC gained from it, and what might be continued as a longer-term initiative as well as any new ideas the process brought up. We could also document and write publicly about the micro-projects, publishing shorter materials that could build awareness of this initiative within sex worker networks.

The outputs from the micro-projects build into something bigger: the *Atlas*. As micro-projects were completed over 2010-2012, the idea would be to compile these into a more substantial output. This could be a publication like the *Subjective Atlas of Palestine* book, or a high profile public event. The Atlas would be an unusual and engaging way of speaking to international or regional audiences, in particular those who often misperceive sex worker rights issues. Thinking even more broadly, we could encourage other sex worker groups in India or other parts of the world to participate in building the Atlas, learning from and replicating the micro-projects that DMSC started. The opportunity the ideas to spread on their own is a key part of the *Atlas*'s potential.

## Annex 1: An Atlas of Radical Cartography, and Subjective Atlas of Palestine

Whilst we have drawn on many of the examples of visual advocacy that Tactical Tech gathered in our publication *Visualising Information for Advocacy: An Introduction to Information Design*<sup>5</sup>, the two main inspirations for *An Atlas of Sex Work* are *An Atlas of Radical Cartography* (2008)<sup>6</sup>, and *Subjective Atlas of Palestine* (2008).<sup>7</sup> These unique and beautiful publications present interesting information in very novel formats, attempting to change and subvert conventional notions of the social themes within. We have posted copies of both these publications to DMSC.



The first, *Radical Cartography*, contains 10 poster-size maps along with essays about them. They include the ground-breaking work done in 1977 by the Unnayan collective in Calcutta to map out marginal land settlements in Calcutta, as the basis for advocacy to the city planners on behalf of the labouring poor against displacement as a result of the city's urban expansion. It also includes maps showing the air routes and airports used by the U.S. government to illegally transfer prisoners of war from Afghanistan and Iraq to prisons in countries where torture was used (so-called "external rendition") using data assembled by NGO investigators; and, an exploration of the pollution in the Los Angeles water cycle, amongst many others. The map below— called «Routes of Least Surveillance» - is one of our favourites. The red dots are the locations of public space surveillance cameras (also known as CCTV). The green lines are the routes different people take to their daily activities, like going to the mosque or to college. The routes shown on the map avoid being filmed by these cameras, demonstrating how intrusive public space security camera surveillance can become:

5 <http://tacticaltech.org/infodesign>

6 <http://an-atlas.com/>

7 <http://www.annelysdevet.nl/palestine/>



Illustration 1: Routes of Least Surveillance - from Atlas of Radical Cartography. An example of how geographic data can be used to tell a story.



The second, *Subjective Atlas of Palestine*, is a book containing the work of 30 Palestinian artists, looking at different aspects of Palestine and the lives of its people. The *Subjective Atlas* presents both statistical and qualitative information about Palestine, presenting viewpoints about the country and its people that are usually drowned out by more dominant narratives of victimisation. We have posted you a hard copy of the *Atlas*, but it is also possible to download for free as a PDF (the filesize is about 16MB) from this link: <http://tinyurl.com/subjectiveatlas>

The *Subjective Atlas of Palestine* is at once humorous and touching, playful and serious. It presents information in many different forms. It has alternative maps of Palestine for example, as well as a photo-essays looking at the difficult process of sourcing ingredients for preparing meals. It looks at what life without an official currency is like. It also has a mock up of what the Israeli West-Bank Separation Wall could look like if it was normalised and fragmented into the regular street pattern:

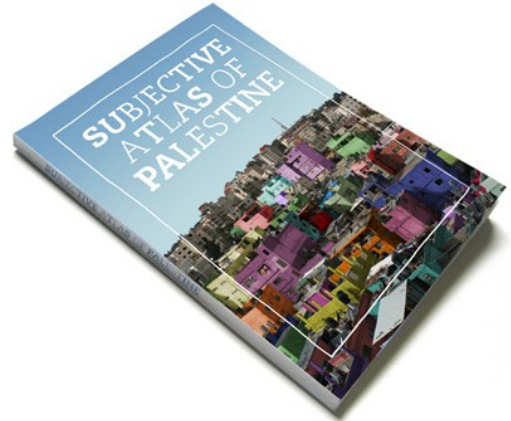


Illustration 2: Fragmented Wall - what the wall around Gaza could look like if it was landscaped - from *Subjective Atlas of Palestine*.

FRAGMENTATION OF THE WALL Senan Abdelqader Architects (Senan Abdelqader, Inas Moussa) 104

FRAGMENTATION OF THE WALL Senan Abdelqader Architects (Senan Abdelqader, Inas Moussa) 105



We also liked this info-graphic from the *Subjective Atlas*. It shows the global distribution of Palestinian refugees:

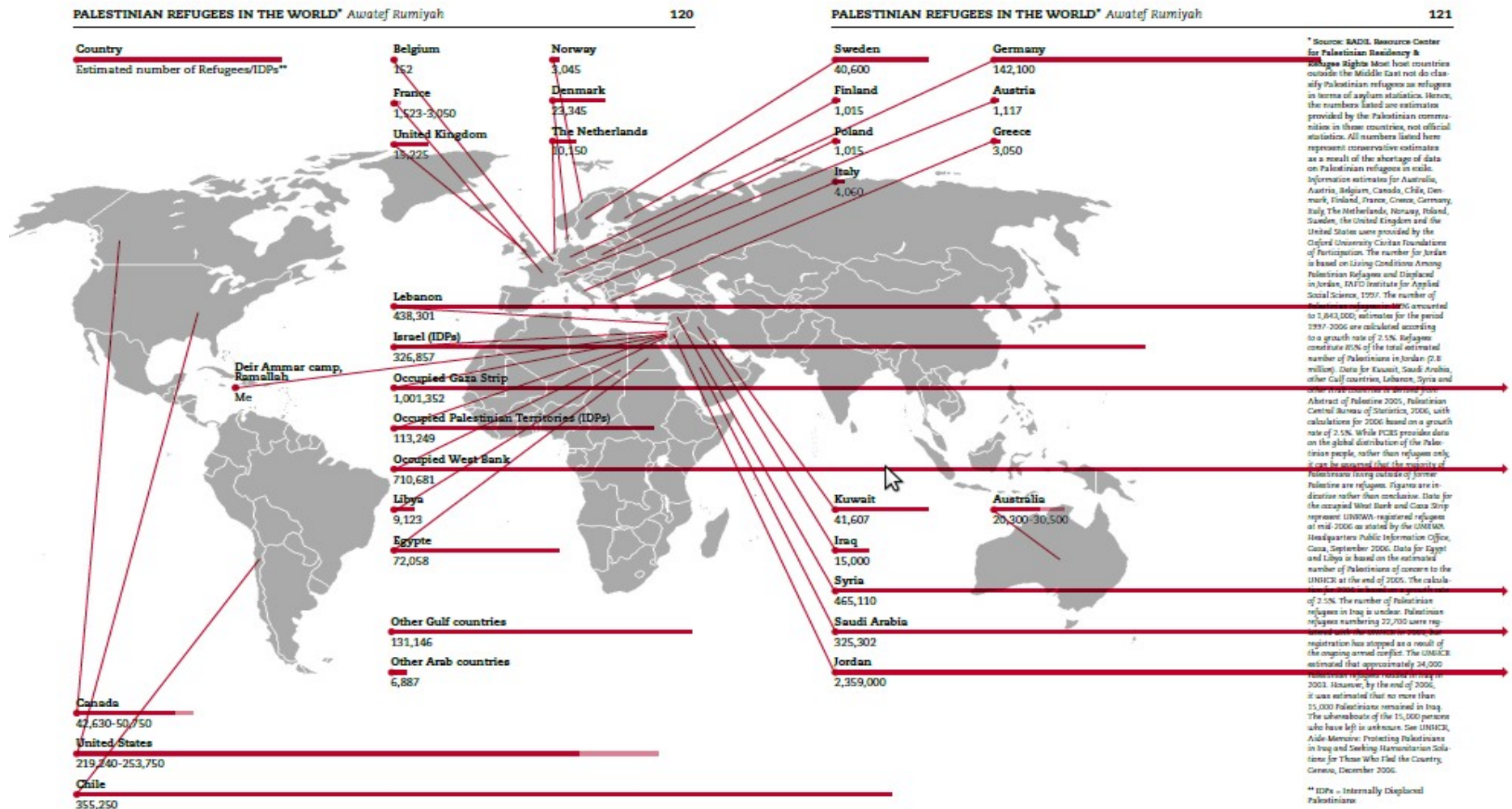


Illustration 3: Palestinian Refugees in the World - from *Subjective Atlas of Palestine*. The image is a little cluttered though. Compare this with the «Products of Slavery» graphic below.



## Annex 2: Other Illustrations

### 1. Recalled Baby Products 2009-2010

This info-graphic shows the number and type of baby products that were recalled in 2009-2010 by the companies that made them. It is shocking that there were so many, and so many reasons for recall. Something similar to this could be an output for the micro-project we have called «Who Victimizes Sex Workers?», on page 6.

The image is designed to be viewed on a computer, through an Internet Browser, or in a large print format. The original can be viewed here:

<http://is.gd/ceCv4>

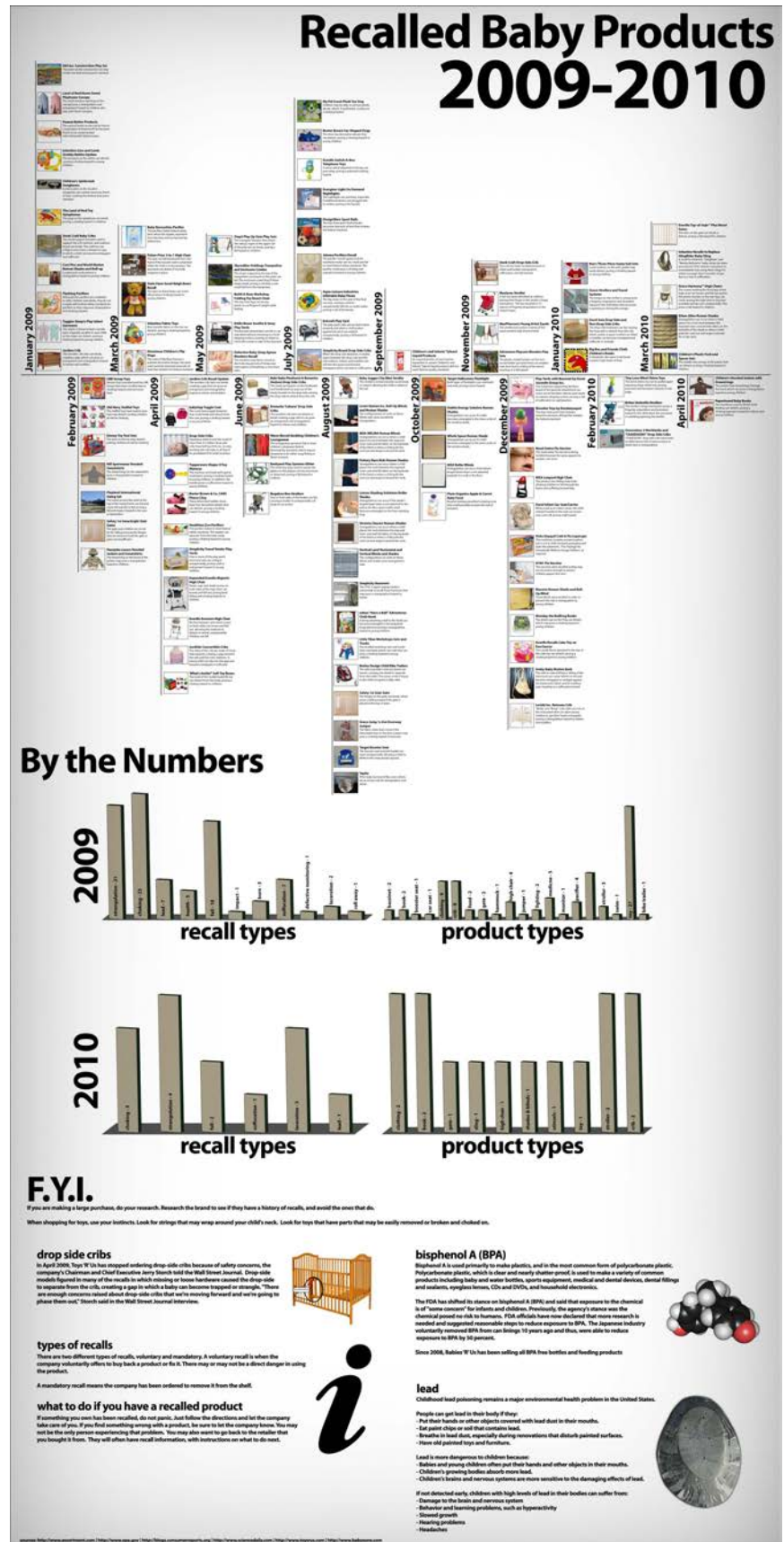
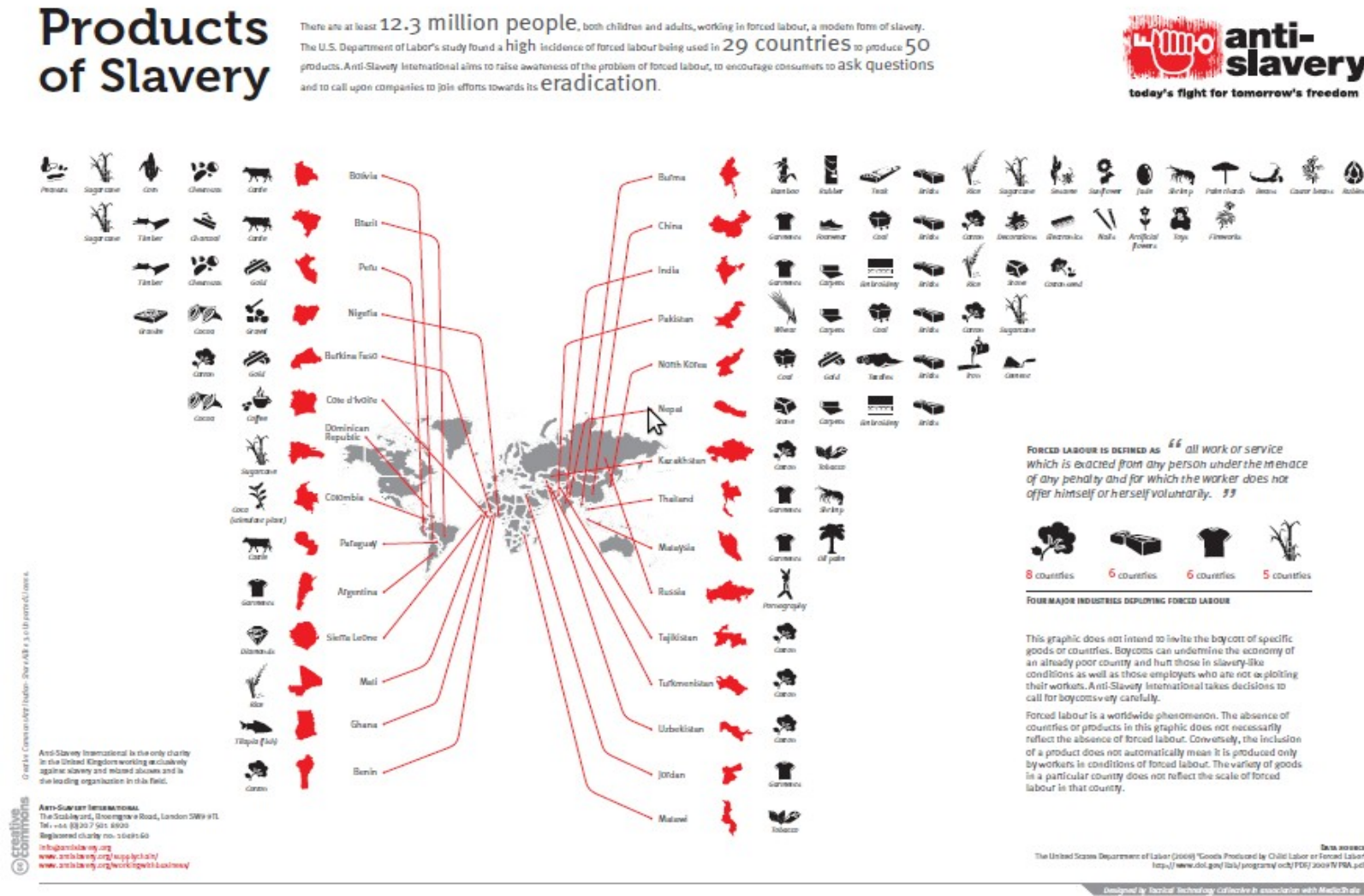


Illustration 4: Recalled Baby Products - by hugamonkey.com



## 2. Products of Slavery

This was produced by Tactical Tech for Anti-Slavery International. It shows the large scale of a highly complex topic, and is a general inspiration for us about the value of info-graphics. It can be downloaded from here: <http://is.gd/ceD1P>



*Illustration 5: Products of Slavery - by Tactical Tech and MediaShala, for Anti-Slavery International*

### 3. Tracking Taxi Flow Across the City

This interactive graphic shows the average number of taxi pickups over a month in Manhattan, in New York, at specific time and locations. This is one of the inspirations for the micro-project «Mapping the Impact of Sex Worker Economies», on page 6. It can be viewed online here: <http://is.gd/ceDkI>

#### Tracking Taxi Flow Across the City

Information from millions of taxi trips provides a telling record of the city's vital signs. The map shows the average number of pickups for different times of the day and days of week, Jan. – March, 2009. [Comments \(43\)](#) | [Related Article »](#)

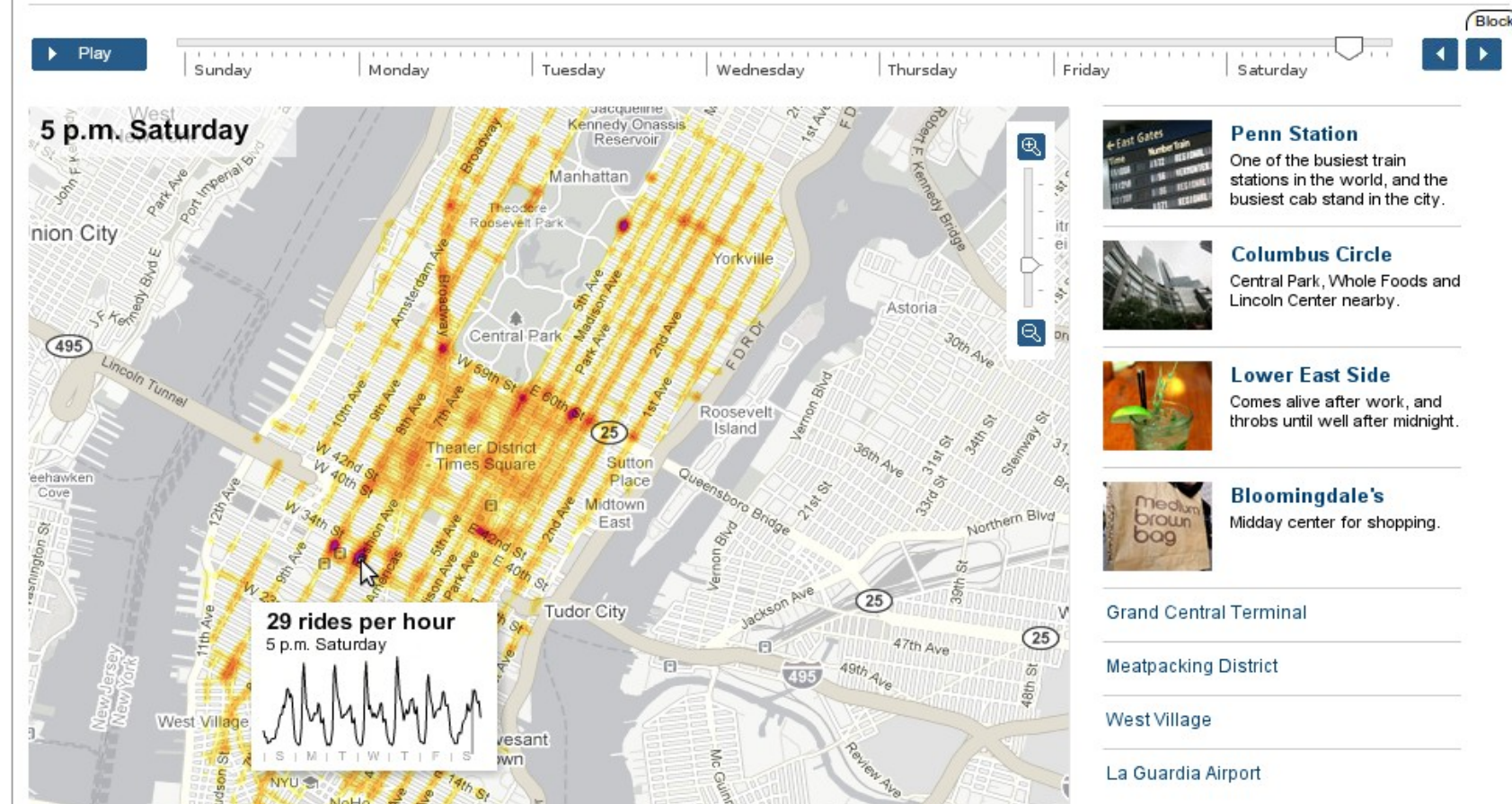
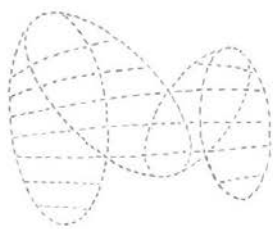


Illustration 6: Tracking Taxi flow across the City - New York Times and Sense Networks

TACTICAL  
TECHNOLOGY  
COLLECTIVE



turning  
information  
into action



# ***The Atlas of Sex Work***

## ***A Discussion Document for WNU***

[www.tacticaltech.org](http://www.tacticaltech.org)

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[www.informationactivism.org](http://www.informationactivism.org)

[www.twitter.com/Info\\_Activism](https://twitter.com/Info_Activism)

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This document is Tactical Tech's proposal to Women's Network for Unity (WNU) for activities to carry out in the IDRC PAN Asia Networking Program funded research project «Using Technology to Document Violations: Enabling Sex Worker Communities to Document Violence Against Them in India and Cambodia».

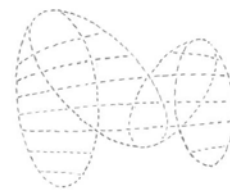
In it we outline an idea called *An Atlas of Sex Work*. This is an organising concept for 5 short micro-projects on different themes to be agreed upon. The micro-projects aim to help sex worker communities affiliated with WNU document different dimensions of the mistreatment they experience, present information in innovative formats and in doing so, strengthen their advocacy initiatives for sex worker rights. The micro-projects will build on WNU's existing skills and expose staff and the community to a mix of different approaches to collecting, organising and presenting data, as well as different digital tools and techniques for doing this.

With the *Atlas* there is the opportunity to try out different approaches to documentation and evaluate what works and what doesn't. From this, WNU could identify practices and techniques that might have organisational and community-wide benefits that could later be institutionalised. Over time, the outputs of each micro-project will be built into the *Atlas*, and there is the potential to invite other sex worker advocacy groups to participate and contribute their own parts of the *Atlas*.

The proposal to create *An Atlas of Sex Work* is based on the insights Tactical Tech's project team gained following the needs assessment work done with WNU in Phnom Penh in August 2010. The ideas described here are for discussion and represent only *one* direction that Tactical Tech and WNU's collaboration could take. In order to assess this approach and see if these projects conceived by Tactical Tech could have an impact for WNU, it may be useful to consider questions like:

- Do these projects support and contribute to WNU's strategy for addressing the anti-trafficking law?
- Could the projects be changed in any way to better suit the context and challenges faced by WNU in Cambodia?
- Would these projects help develop and strengthen the capacities of WNU members and the Secretariat?

Hopefully, the WNU Secretariat can discuss this together and develop a response in terms of what they think will be feasible, do-able and ultimately strategically rewarding. Most importantly, we would hope that like us at Tactical Tech, WNU feels that the *Atlas of Sex Work* would be a challenging, innovative, and exciting project to work on.



## What is «An Atlas of Sex Work»?

An *Atlas of Sex Work* is an organising concept for package of activities and publications that would contextually and visually explore the experience of the sex workers who have formed WNU. It is intended to be a *subjective atlas* about sex work in Cambodia, with a broad focus on the many ways sex workers are mistreated and become victims of violence and stigma.

The term “atlas” sounds unusual in this context, as it is commonly associated with geography and cartographic mapping. The atlas we describe here is a set of visual and graphic outputs as well as a *process* that allows WNU to conceptualise advocacy and campaigning in terms of visual tools and data as tactics. The Atlas could include digital mapping, video, audio, info-graphics and illustrations. Thus the Atlas could also serve as an opportunity for WNU to build its internal capacities, external networking and overall development as an organisation.

The Atlas of Sex Work is a growing project, capturing the environment of sex work through the perspectives and experiences of sex workers. It has the potential to grow into a global repository of information and strategy/tactics that sex worker communities and organizations may contribute to. It would hopefully complement WNU's advocacy in this area, and the process of creating the atlas would strengthen WNU's technical capacity to use digital documentation techniques, and to make effective use of information about mistreatment.

The *Atlas* would be created from five micro-projects that explore particular themes or issue areas that WNU is engaged with. They would each present stories, numbers and imagery about that theme in visually compelling and engaging ways. These would represent framed messages that support WNU's advocacy aims.

The outputs of each project — whether in print, digital or other media - would give WNU's advocates tools and tactics that can be used to strengthen their work. These outputs could be released as they are completed, so as to generate tangible results and to enable us to learn and adjust as we go along.

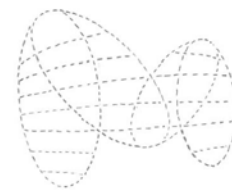
Some of the inspirations for the *Atlas* are outlined in Annex I to this document, which also contains some of the illustrations that have inspired the micro-projects. We are also sending to you by mail two of the publications that have inspired us: *Subjective Atlas of Palestine*, and *An Atlas of Radical Cartography*. They will arrive at WNU shortly. It is important to reiterate that these examples are only inspirations, and not how we envisage the actual form of the micro-projects described here. These inspirations are extremely well-resourced, fairly long-term projects involving large, diverse groups of people in different global locations. The *Atlas* concept described here has been influenced by the idea of representing alternate realities that are often invisible in mainstream perceptions of sex work.



## Why Tactical Tech is suggesting the Atlas of Sex Work to WNU

Tactical Tech's needs assessment work with WNU in Phnom Penh in August 2010 identified a good opportunity to use information creatively to challenge entrenched ideas about sex work in Cambodia as an approach to reducing violence. During the needs assessment work we were able to spend time talking to many different WNU secretariat members and community members about their work and aspirations. We learned about groups of persons that WNU identifies as being responsible for systematic violence against sex workers. Many discussions and workshop sessions with WNU helped us understand some of the information processes and documentation methods that are used by the organisation and community, and the different ways that information is shared and made public. Through the assessment, we gained many insights about WNU's current documentation and advocacy processes, but the following have influenced us most strongly:

1. The Impact of the Anti Trafficking Law: The Anti Trafficking Law casts a long shadow over sex work in Cambodia at present. It's implementation has serious implications for sex workers' health, the ability to protect themselves from HIV infection, the right to life, to be free from violence, and to work. Moreover, it is also changing the rhythms and patterns of the trade; for example, sex workers in Phnom Penh are changing their work-hours in order to avoid raids and arrests. It is also changing the economies of sex work, by making the bars, karaoke bars, clubs etc where sex workers work equally vulnerable to police harassment. This in turn affects sex workers' opportunities for work. At this moment, therefore, it becomes important for WNU to develop a specific, strategic on how they are going to address the effects of this law.
2. Strengthening WNU's Capacities: WNU as an organization is at an interesting moment when it is moving from a loose collective of sex workers to a more professional organization. However, there are areas that need strengthening, such as with literacy, computer skills and managing donors, other stakeholders, deal with administrative and financial issues. The Atlas of Sex Work projects suggested here therefore could help strengthen some functions within WNU and build on existing skills and capacities.
3. WNU's Networks, Community based Response and Outreach: The organization has about 5000 members spread across the country and Secretariat in Phnom Penh has 7 members, who are connected to the members through a network of team leaders and field based coordinators. WNU's members are able to mobilise and collectively work together effectively in supporting each other, as earlier strategic and successful campaigns have shown. Projects that allow WNU to build on this strength have been devised. Additionally, these projects have a more strategic approach to addressing the conditions of sex work under the current law, by targeting information to the media, other NGOs and civil society stakeholders nationally and internationally, and the government.
4. WNU's Political Approach: WNU has had a reputation for being an energetic, spontaneous organisation that responds quickly, on-the-ground to the needs of it's members. It has a strong grassroots network and the voice of the community is clear and widely heard. WNU has a strong and unique position on sexwork and sexuality, supporting the human rights of sex workers to earn their livelihoods through the trade. WNU has also been extremely articulate in their analysis of the politics of funding for anti trafficking and HIV prevention work, like for example, USAID funding. This critical perspective is



invaluable and the development of project ideas for this Atlas has been influenced by their strong, political stance. The projects suggested herein could help WNU take their ideas to a wider audience, particularly in the international context.

## **What could be in an «Atlas of Sex Work»?**

Here are five initial themes and ideas that could be turned into the micro-projects that would build up into the *Atlas*. The micro-projects aim to be creative responses to real challenges that WNU has identified, and blend different approaches to collecting, managing and presenting information that will help WNU build its skills. The physical outputs from all the projects would be print, video or other digital resources. They would all have internal audiences of sex workers communities, so the resources could be spread through internal communications channels. Where something specific has inspired us, we have included links to the resource on the Internet. Some of the illustrations are included in this document's Annexes, and we have also posted some publications to WNU.

### **MicroProject #1: Choices, Choices**

**Aim:** Challenge the stigma that surrounds sex work and sex workers as 'immoral' people. Compare and contrast the opportunities different groups of people have, leading to the different livelihoods options available to them.

**Background:** Possibly, the average Khmer person thinks that sex workers are immoral and bad and don't deserve rights. By recognizing that sex workers often choose sex work in the absence of other livelihood options, and in order to survive, it may be possible to make audiences aware of the pressures under which sex workers live.

**Process & Possible Outputs:** In this microproject, WNU members would collect audio and video interviews from a range of Cambodians by asking them to respond to the question: 'why do you do what you do?' This could be collected as *vox pops* with people in different professions: police people, hairdressers, shopkeepers, sex workers, drivers, security guards, masseurs, bartenders, gang members, *tuktuk* drivers, and so on. There would need to eventually be a large bank of responses/stories that can then be layered, edited into audio and visual outputs. Would the reasons why people do certain kinds of work seem to be the same – thus emphasizing that sex work is also just work sometimes.

Through the process it will be important to tease out more nuanced responses as well to get a good sense of the livelihoods options different groups of people actually have in Cambodia, and to layer this against more direct responses to 'why do you do what you do'. This can be clarified and incorporated more strategically through the pre-production interview-tool development.

**Variation:** This could also be played as a game. Get a viewer to listen to some data, ie a response to the question 'why do you do what you do' and let them guess the line of work the speaker is in. The person guessing the professional identity of the speaker can also be filmed.

**Potential Audiences:** Media, general public, police

**Inputs required:**

- Audio and video interviews about perceptions about choices made to do certain kinds of work, including sex work



Resources required for implementation (External):

- Flip cameras (or inexpensive video cameras)
- Portable sound recording equipment
- Content workshop & training for WNU in how to use audio & video equipment
- An Interview Tool – a set of questions for interviews along with notes on how to ask them.
- Brief overview of ethics and guidelines around filming, consent
- Editing facilities + editor
- Strategic advocacy plan on how the film will be distributed and shared – online, offline, in what formats to share with key audiences.

Resources required for implementation (TacticalTech Internal):

- Overseeing training workshops
- Production planning with WNU
- Ensuring film reaches audiences – strategic positioning of the film

## **MicroProject #2: 'Rescued From Sex Work' Documentary Short**

Aim: Show the contradictions in which the AT law is being implemented. That sex-workers need to be rescued from the rescue efforts and how implementation is causing the violation of sex workers' human rights.

Background: There are poignant, telling moments in Dale's film *Between the Tiger and the Crocodile* where sex workers say they thought the NGO detention centre was actually prison, the conditions obviously being horrific. The purpose of this incarceration is to hold sex workers till they get transferred to garment factories where they make cheap clothes in sweat-shop like conditions, as an alternative to sex work. However, no one ever asks sex workers if this is indeed a livelihood option they want.

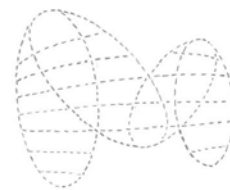
Process & Potential Outputs: In this, WNU would create a documentary exploring the ordeal of 'rescued' sex workers juxtaposed with an overview of the NGO's involved in rescue efforts – what are their missions, how do they benefit from being involved? The film would interview sex workers in a focused way about their experiences of being arrested, 'rescued' and put into NGO detention centres and then being made to work in garment factories. Interview the NGOs and garment factories as well to get their perspective on what they think they're doing. (This would need to be strategically planned though). These narratives could be backed up with data that shows how many of these women were actually trafficked into sex work, and held under the Anti Trafficking Law.

Possible Additional Information: This footage could be used against information from other groups (such as Anti Slavery International) that show, for example, that T-shirts from Cambodia are actually made by sex workers arrested under the AT law. Would we be able to actually find some T-Shirts made by sex workers?

We could also add data about how many sex workers who have been trafficked have actually been rescued as a result of the implementation.

Audiences: Cambodian media, international NGOs.

Inputs required:



- Interviews with sex workers who have been held in detention centres and been made to work in garment factories
- Background research – for filming – about the NGOs who are rehabilitating sex workers, how they are recruited and how they get into this work; their affiliations; their connections with garment factories, donor agencies etc.
- Background research (by intern) on numbers of sex workers actually trafficked in Cambodia, how many have been held in detention under the AT Law.

Resources required for implementation (External):

- Production & scripting workshops
- Filmmaker with basic crew for filming
- Film research intern (could be part of the crew)

Resources required for implementation (TacticalTech Internal):

- Supporting content development and ensuring that it is strategic
- Ensuring strategic positioning of final outputs – nationally and internationally

### **MicroProject # 3: Infographic on the Contradictions between the Anti Trafficking Law and the 100% Condom Use Policy**

Aim: To show the contradiction and discrepancy between the AT Law and the Condom Use Law, and that they in fact, theoretically, cancel each other out.

Background: Continuing with the theme raised in MicroProject 2 above, of showing contradictions in the AT Law, this micro-project looks at the discrepancies between how the AT Law is being implemented and the aims of HIV prevention. There is already anecdotal evidence that reveals the impact of the conflict between these two laws: for fear of being arrested, sex workers do not always feel safe carrying condoms; further, being incarcerated prevents already HIV positive sex workers from accessing their medication.

Output: An info-graphic showing How HIV transmission rates changed in Cambodia since the implementation of the laws. The idea is not to show a causal relationship, but to merely place two sets of data together to show that there is no decrease in the HIV rate despite the 100% condom use policy

Audience: Cambodian Public Health Policy Makers, US Policy Makers, International NGOs.

Inputs Required:

- Data on HIV rates in Cambodia amongst sex workers from national and independent sources from 2008-present
- Data on how many sex workers have been arrested and held under the AT law since 2008
- Case studies and narratives from experiences of sex workers under the condom use law, from health agencies, from HIV prevention agencies

Resources required for implementation (External):

- Research intern to support WNU in gathering different kinds of data from external sources and through the internet.
- WNU to collect data from sex workers on the impact of the condom use law in terms of being arrested.
- Design and data visualisation for infographics
- Contacts and connections with HIV prevention agencies in Cambodia to enable collection of data.

Resources required for implementation (TacticalTech Internal):

- Supporting intern on data collection
- Strategic positioning of infographic internationally
- Organising training for WNU to collect qualitative data collection from sex workers

## **MicroProject #4: Who Victimises Sex Workers?**

Aim: To visualise the range of perpetrators and diversity of mistreatment that contribute to victimization of Sex Workers.

Background: WNU collects lengthy reports from team leaders and field coordinators around the country about incidents of violence and mistreatment sex workers face, and their health status, and other general issues they need help with. However, very little is know about the data since it remains locked in reports and has not been aggregated. In this, WNU would be supported to mine these reports for data and information that can be visualised as infographics. At the same time, WNU would get some training in how to organize, aggregate and use their data more effectively.

Potential Outputs:

- A single or set of info-graphics.
- A better organised system of reporting and organisation within WNU

Potential Audiences: General public; law enforcement and legal apparatus; law-makers.

Inputs Required:

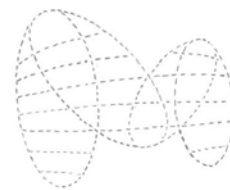
- Data from existing WNU records on types of mistreatment faced by sex workers
- Data analysis and visual representation.
- Trainings for WNU staff and members involved in this

Resources Required for Implementation (External):

- External support (an organization) to WNU in organising their data and reports
- Research intern who could support WNU in going through existing data
- Data visualisation and design person

Resources Required for Implementation (Tactical Tech):

- Identifying the best organisation to support WNU in this (for example, the Cambodia Centre for Human Rights that has a lot of experience in setting up and managing data on human rights, and with Khmer language support)
- Identifying data visualisation and design / visual representation people



- Support to WNU to translate changes in reporting to the rest of the organization. Helping them translate new practices to the rest of the organisation.

## **MicroProject # 5: Mapping and ranking police stations by sex-worker friendliness**

Aim: To create a data set of how emancipated, supportive police stations are in dealing with sex workers.

Background: Sex workers are highly aware and conscious of what makes some police stations 'friendly', and others not. This gives an opportunity for structured information and simple visualisation.

Possible Outputs: Simple infographic showing how sex workers rate, rank and perceive police behaviour. This could be visualised as a set of score cards for different police stations.

Inputs Required:

- Sex workers' perceptions of police behaviour
- Interviews with sex workers who have been recently incarcerated or arrested for different offences.
- National statistics, if any, on police stations and police violence, police quality of work and standard of living

Audiences: Sex workers, police, government, general public, media

Resources required for implementation (External):

- Design and data visualisation
- Support with data analysis local

Resources required for implementation (TacticalTech Internal):

- Workshop with WNU to create a check list or scale on which to rate and rank police behaviour
- Training sex workers to collect data for the infographic; collaboratively developing an interview and data collection tool for sex workers to rate and rank police behaviour.

## **How Would An Atlas of Sex Work be created?**

The *Atlas* would be created through collaboration. WNU has huge grass-roots access, mobilisation, a strong sense of its values and human rights, and a membership that is articulate about these. Tactical Tech can offer help with conceptualising ideas, designing projects, process facilitation, technical expertise and training with a range of new and different approaches to working with information.

The *Atlas* approach is *modular* and *iterative*. Each micro-project is centred on a specific theme, imagined to be implemented from as little as 8 weeks to a few months, depending on any systems or training that would need building in to the process. Each project isn't a huge cost in time, resource and organisational upheaval for WNU.

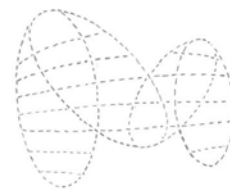
*The idea is to learn what works and improve as we go along, allowing us see what approaches could be institutionalised by WNU at a later date.*

This complements the action research component of the project, which emphasizes a process of ongoing reflection by participants in this collaboration.

At the start of each micro-project, Tactical Tech would work collaboratively with WNU to think through the project. This would include:

- Identifying the project's aims and objectives and the opportunities for advocacy it could present; and further developing and rethinking aspects of the project along with the project team to fit WNU's needs.
- Finding who could be involved in the project from WNU (including from the community).
- For each microproject, to carefully plan and outline the types of information to be collected, how to collect it, possible sources of information without and outside WNU, and methods of presentation.
- Identifying relevant digital techniques, technical and training requirements.
- Identifying, sourcing and engaging specialised external support as required.
- Assisting with project management, including the development of timelines and resource allocation.

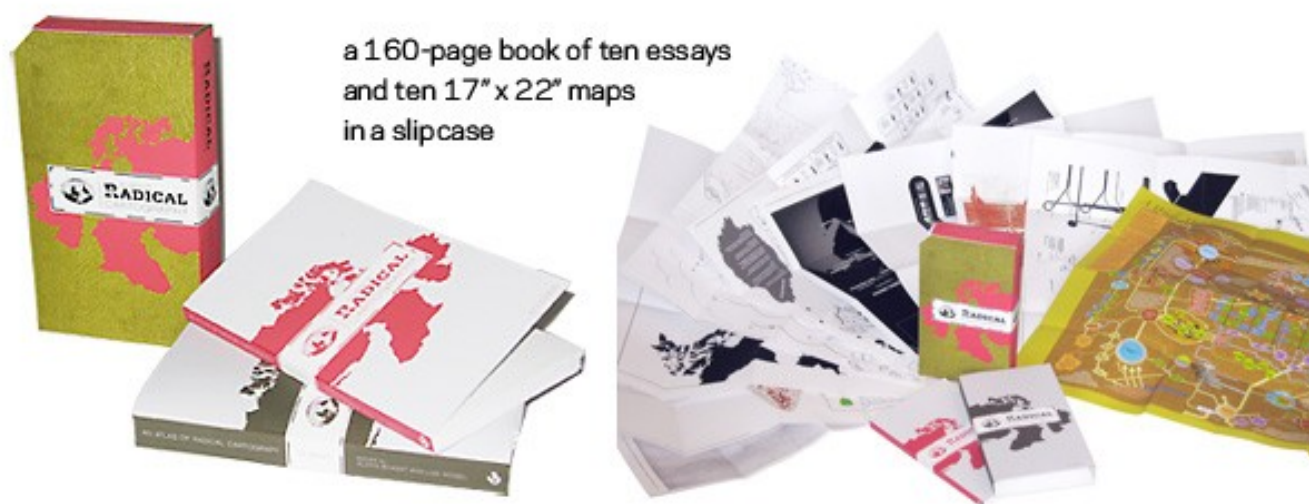
WNU would then implement the project, with the ongoing support of Tactical Tech. As each project came to an end, Tactical Tech and WNU would repeat the process. Together, we would look at what worked and what didn't, what WNU gained from it, and what might be continued as a longer-term initiative as well as any new ideas the process brought up. We could also document and write publicly about the micro-projects, publishing shorter materials that could build awareness of this initiative within sex worker networks. As micro-projects are completed over 2011-2012, the idea would be to compile these into substantial outputs that can be shared with diverse audiences, partners both internationally and nationally. The Atlas would be an unusual and engaging way of speaking to international or regional audiences, in particular those who often misperceive sex worker rights issues. Thinking even more broadly, we could encourage other sex worker groups in other parts of the world to participate in building the Atlas, learning from and replicating the micro-projects that WNU started. The opportunity the ideas to spread on their own is a key part of the *Atlas's* potential.



## Annex I: An Atlas of Radical Cartography, and Subjective Atlas of Palestine

Whilst we have drawn on many of the examples of visual advocacy that Tactical Tech gathered in our publication *Visualising Information for Advocacy: An Introduction to Information Design*<sup>1</sup>, the two main inspirations for *An Atlas of Sex Work* are *An Atlas of Radical Cartography* (2008)<sup>2</sup>, and *Subjective Atlas of Palestine* (2008).<sup>3</sup> These unique and beautiful publications present interesting information in very novel formats, attempting to change and subvert conventional notions of the social themes within. We have posted copies of both these publications to DMSC.

The first, *Radical Cartography*, contains 10 poster-size maps along with essays about them. They include the



a 160-page book of ten essays  
and ten 17" x 22" maps  
in a slipcase

ground-breaking work done in 1977 by the Unnayan collective in Calcutta to map out marginal land settlements in Calcutta, as the basis for advocacy to the city planners on behalf of the labouring poor against displacement as a result of the city's urban expansion. It also includes maps showing the air routes and airports used by the U.S. government to illegally transfer prisoners of war from Afghanistan and Iraq to prisons in countries where torture was used (so-called "external rendition") using data assembled by NGO investigators; and, an exploration of the pollution in the Los Angeles water cycle, amongst many others.

1 <http://tacticaltech.org/infodesign>

2 <http://an-atlas.com/>

3 <http://www.annelysdevet.nl/palestine/>

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# Appendix 6

| SELF ASSESMENT TOOL- TTC project (DMSC) |   |           |          |         |            |  |
|---|---|-----------|----------|---------|------------|--|
| S. No.                                  | PRACTICES   | LEVEL 1   | LEVEL 2  | LEVEL 3 | LEVEL 4    | LEVEL 5  |
|   |   | KNOWLEDGE | REACTION | ACTION  | SYSTEMATIC | LIFE STYLE(2012)   |
| 1                                       | Methodology of documentation(Aggregating, Collating,visually representing information)                |           |          |         |            | Part of standard response in DMSC, documentation for all projects feeding into advocacy outputs and strategies |
| 2                                       | Tailoring information or data for specific audience(Police , Policy maker, Public, Media, Sex worker) |           |          |         |            | Advocacy has a positive desired impact on target audience  |
| 3                                       | Capacity for evidence based advocacy in DMSC  |           |          |         |            | Everybody knows how to collect , collate & package information for target audience in campaign                 |
| 4                                       | Eviction regulated in sex work sites  |           |          |         |            | Sex workers are able to voice their rights not to be evicted+ perpetrators know evidence has been collected    |
| 5                                       | Resource mobilisation (people, capacity building, finances)   |           |          |         |            | Total funding for completion, sharing+ replication+ human resource management+ data entry design               |
| 6                                       | Reflective Practice   |           |          |         |            | We regularly use self assessment tool for all our projects in DMSC   |

TTC/WNU Self Assessment Tool

| SL. NO. | PRACTICES             | LEVEL 1             | LEVEL 2 | LEVEL 3                  | LEVEL 4                              | LEVEL 5  |
|---------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
|         |                       | Knowledge/awareness | Skills  | Can perform some actions | Systematically /regularly DO actions | Lifestyle, expertise, overcome challenges  |
| 1       | Campaigns             |                     |         |                          |                                      | we campaign using a variety of tools that we disseminate, including: case studies, interviews, photos, videos, meeting presentations, round tables, cooperate with authority, press conference, marching, organize joint campaigns (e.g. joining work with women's movement to end rape campaign), media, radio talk |
| 2       | Relationship building |                     |         |                          |                                      | we receive support from allies/partners on our activities  |
| 3       | Case studies          |                     |         |                          |                                      | TTC/WNU has clear and effective case studies methodology put into use and used as an evidence-base to advocacy. We use case study-evidence to influence government and to change policies; effective case-study dissemination practices in place   |
| 4       | Surveys               |                     |         |                          |                                      | TTC/WNU has clear and effective survey methodology, used as evidence-base for advocacy. We use survey to stop: violence against sex workers and stigma/discrimination. We have effective survey-findings dissemination practices in place  |
| 5       | M&E/reflection        |                     |         |                          |                                      | we will see a good outcome of our project as a result of reflection on our activities by using the tool. We use the reflection tool at least every 6 months  |